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Henry I. Williams.

MISCELLANEOUS PLAYS,

BY

JOANNA BAILLIE.

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TO

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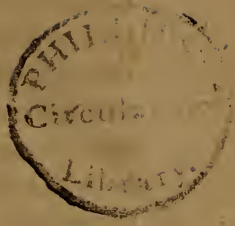

In the language of the two Tragedies of this volume, a few ſlight alterations, I hope for the better, will be found from that of the firſt edition, ſo ſlight indeed, that I ſcarcely know whether or not they deſerve to be mentioned. As for the Comedy, believing it has been generally diſliked, I have been afraid to touch it, leſt, going over it again, deprived of that animation ſo favourable to amendment which encouragement always gives, I ſhould make it worſe inſtead of better.

Several of my friends, ſince Rayner was publiſhed, and one of them, I muſt confeſs, for whoſe judgment I have the higheſt reſpect, before it was publiſhed, have objected to the deſcription of the flooded river, Act 5th, page 127, as very improper in the circumſtances under which it is introduced. I readily grant it may be apt to appear ſo at firſt ſight; but I ſhould think, that when thoſe circumſtances are more perfectly conſidered, this objec-

tion will be conſiderably weakened. When the Counteſs and Confeſſor are told the bridge is broken down, the diſtance which the Meſſenger muſt then go, in the ſhort time allowed for it, is ſo great that it ſeems impoſſible, and therefore overwhelms their thoughts. To have deſired the Meſſenger, notwithſtanding, to mount his horſe and ſet off immediately, would, as far as I am able to judge, *not* have been natural; for it is upon ſlight, not upon great, occaſions that the mind recovers itſelf ſufficiently from diſappointment to give directions immediately as to what is next to be done. I have ſuppoſed the Counteſs and Confeſſor not as liſtening to the Meſſenger's deſcription, but as recovering, while he ſpeaks, from the ſhock, and conſidering whether their object is ſtill poſſible. The difficulty here ſeems to me to be this; whether is it moſt natural for the Meſſenger himſelf, juſt returned from beholding an awful ſight in nature, to have his mind moſt engroſſed with that, or with the idea of riding to the town in time to ſave the priſoner, a thing which appears to him abſolutely impoſſible? for it ſhould be remembered, that till they call him upon the ſtage, he has no idea of the nature of the errand for which he was kept in readineſs, therefore, it could not beforehand have intereſted his mind. If the firſt of theſe ſuppoſitions is moſt natural, I ſhould think I am in a good degree juſtified in introducing this paſſage; if the laſt, I am certainly wrong. It is a fault, however, eaſily rectified by drawing a pen acroſs every line of the

ſpeech except the two firſt; and if the play ſhould ever be acted, this muſt be done for another reaſon, viz. that no theatre could afford to put into ſuch an inſignificant character as that of a Meſſenger an actor capable of reciting it.—Another objection may be made to this ſpeech, that people in his ſituation do not make ſuch ſpeeches. People in his ſituation of life will not, it is true, to any length make ſpeeches of ſentiment and reflection; but the ſtrong impreſſion made upon them by a grand and awful object, will put them, for the time being, in poſſeſſion of a power of language and ſtrength of deſcription which I am not vain enough to ſuppoſe I can equal. The language of deſcription, having nothing to do with artificial phraſes or abſtract words, is more equally at the command of all ranks of men than any other, that of ſtrong paſſion excepted.

It has alſo been objected, from many different quarters, that the incident of Ohio ſawing acroſs the main beam of the ſcaffold, &c. is a very bad one, and ſo abſurd, that it would ſet an audience into a roar of laughter. That it is not a good one I very readily admit; but, in repreſentation, the abſurdity, or I ought rather to ſay, ludicrouſneſs of it, ſo far from being more obvious, would be leſs ſo than in the cloſet. In reading a play, what is repreſented as paſſing upon the ſtage, and what is related as paſſing elſewhere, are both brought before the imagination with nearly equal ſtrength; but, in repreſentation, what is only related ſinks into a degree

of dimneſs and diſtance, by which it is almoſt comparatively annihilated. This incident, however, is moſt certainly not happily conceived, and as it is all compriſed within the compaſs of a very few lines, might eaſily be changed into any other in which Ohio is ſtill made the agent, by any perſon who ſhould be willing to bring this play before an audience.

In Act firſt of Conſtantine, page 307, I find that my meaning has been ſometimes miſunderſtood. It never once entered into my idea to repreſent the Emperor as yielding to his wife's fears, ſo far as to ſend his friends to face the danger threatened from the outrageous multitude without him. I have made him, whilſt he appears to yield, put ſuch conduct in the meaneſt and moſt contemptible light, truſting that her generous nature would revolt from it, as an eaſier way of making her ſubmit to the neceſſity than giving a determined refuſal. In a narrative, where all the ſecret thoughts of the heart can be as eaſily made known as thoſe which a character is made to utter, there is little excuſe either for leaving your meaning in a doubtful ſtate, or bringing it out too laborioufly; but, in a ſtory carried on entirely, or almoſt entirely, in dialogue, it is very difficult to avoid both theſe faults, into which I confeſs I am too apt to fall.

TO THE READER.

THOUGH I have already met with ſo much indulgence from the public for a work obſcured with many faults, and might venture, without great miſtruſt, to bring before it the Plays which I now offer, unaccompanied by any previous demand upon the attention of my reader, which is generally an unwelcome thing, I muſt nevertheleſs beg for a few minutes to treſpaſs upon his patience.—It has been, and ſtill is, my ſtrongeſt deſire to add a few pieces to the ſtock of what may be called our national or permanently acting plays, how unequal ſoever my abilities may be to the object of my ambition *. I have, therefore, in the "Series of Plays," though purſuing a particular plan, endeavoured fully to delineate the character of the chief perſon of each drama, independently of his being the ſubject of a particular paſſion; ſo that we might have an idea of what kind of a man he would have been had no

* See page 58. of the introduction to the "Series of Plays."

circumſtances ever ariſen to bring that paſſion violently into action. I have endeavoured alſo diſtinctly to diſcriminate the inferior characters, becauſe they, not being allowed to exhibit violent paſſion, leſt they ſhould too much interfere with the principal object, had more need of ſuch diſtinct diſcrimination to prevent them from being altogether inſignificant, and to prevent each play from becoming a mere picture of paſſion which might be tedious and heavy to an audience accuſtomed to variety of character and incident. This I have done, how unſkilfully ſoever I may have done it, with a hope, which I will not yet abandon, that ſome of the dramas belonging to that work may hereafter be thought worthy of being admitted into that claſs of plays to which I am ſo deſirous of adding ſomething. However, I am ſenſible that were thoſe plays more ſucceſsful then I dare flatter myſelf to expect, they all require too much power of expreſſion and delicacy of diſcrimination in the actor who repreſents the principal character—the whole depends too much on the exertion of one individual, and ſuch a one too as can very rarely be found, ever to become plays that will commonly be brought upon the ſtage *. Convinced of this,

* Let it not be ſuppoſed from the above that I have the ſlighteſt intention of diſcontinuing the "Series of Plays." So far from it, I hope that the work will go on the better for being occaſionally broke in upon by pieces of a different kind; and though I admit they are not altogether well

as well as wiſhing ſometimes to vary my employment, I have long ſince propoſed to myſelf not to confine my pen entirely to one taſk, but to write from time to time, as inclination might lead me or circumſtances ſuggeſt, an unconnected or (may I ſo call it?) a free, independent play, that might have a chance of pleaſing upon a ſtage, circumſtanced as ſtages generally are, with no particular advantages. I have wiſhed to leave behind me in the world a few plays, ſome of which might have a chance of continuing to be acted even in our canvaſs theatres and barns; and of preſerving to my name ſome remembrance with thoſe who are lovers of that ſpecies of amuſement which I have above every other enjoyed.

I am well aware, however, that having ſucceeded in one ſpecies of writing gives us no ſure grounds to preſume that we ſhall be equally fortunate in any other; no, not even in that which moſt nearly approaches to it. Not only the epic poet may write a bad tragedy, but the ſonnet writer may find himſelf greatly at a loſs in compoſing a few tender couplets for muſic. I have ſeldom ſeen any piece, not appearing to me to poſſeſs great merit (for ſuch things I have ſeen), ſucceed upon the ſtage, without feeling inclined to ſay to myſelf, "don't deſpiſe this: very probably in

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fitted for the ſtage, as it is commonly circumſtanced, I ſtill think plays upon that plan are capable of being made upon the ſtage more intereſting than any other ſpecies of drama.

attempting, even upon no higher grounds, ſuch ſucceſs as the preſent, and giving to it alſo the whole bent of your thoughts, you would find yourſelf miſerably diſappointed." I offer to the public, therefore, a work of a kind ſo nearly related to that in which I have already had ſome degree of ſucceſs and encouragement, with almoſt the diffidence of an entirely inexperienced writer.

To publiſh a volume of miſcellaneous plays, I am very ſenſible, is making a large demand upon the attention of my readers, and expoſing the plays themſelves likewiſe to the danger of being read in a way that will diminiſh their effect, and in every way prove a great diſadvantage to them. People are in the habit of reading but one new play at a time, which by this means makes a full undivided impreſſion upon the mind; and though we are not obliged to read all the plays of a volume, one following another, ſo that they muſt crowd, and joſtle, and tread upon one another's heels; yet who, with a new work in his hands, if he be at all pleaſed with it, will ſhut up the book after the firſt portion of it is over, and wait till he has properly digeſted what he has got before he proceed with the remainder? I am inclined to believe that each of the plays in the ſeries has at firſt ſuffered conſiderably from being read in this manner; but in pieces connected with one another this mode of publication is in ſome degree neceſſary, at leaſt there is in it more propriety. So much am I convinced of this that it was at one time my intention to publiſh theſe

plays ſeparately, and it is with ſome difficulty that I have been prevailed upon to give up this intention. May I then beg of my reader to pardon, in the firſt place, ſo great a demand upon his attention by offeringat once a volume of plays to his peruſal; in the next place, to have the goodneſs not to read it haſtily, but to pauſe, ſome days at leaſt, between each play, that they may have in this reſpect the ſame advantages which new plays generally have. Let him not ſmile: this laſt is a requeſt which I earneſtly make, and if it is not complied with, I ſhall almoſt be tempted to think myſelf hardly treated *.

I muſt alſo mention, that each of the plays contained in this volume has been, at one time or other, offered for repreſentation to one or other of

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* It may be urged, indeed, that unconnected poems bound up together, and almoſt every other ſpecies of compoſition, muſt ſuffer for being read in haſty ſucceſſion in the ſame way. And ſo in ſome degree they do. But in reading deſcriptions of nature, ſucceſſions of thoughts, and narratives of every kind, the ideas they repreſent to the mind are as troops drawn out before it in looſe marſhalled array, whoſe moſt animated movements it ſurveys ſtill as a ſpectator; whilſt in reading a drama, where every character ſpeaks immediately in his own perſon, we by ſympathy ruſh, as it were, ourſelves into the battle, and fight under every man's coat of mail by turns. This is an exerciſe of the mind ſo cloſe and vigorous, that we retire from it exhauſted; and if curioſity ſhould urge us on without ſufficient reſt to the next engagement that calls for us, we enter the field bewildered, and ſpiritleſs, and weak.

our winter theatres, and been rejected. This my reader will readily believe is not done in the ſpirit of vanity; and I beg of him alſo to believe, that neither is it at all done in that of complaint. I merely mention it, becauſe otherwiſe it muſt have appeared abſurd to introduce from the preſs what has been expreſsly written to come before the public in a different manner, without making any attempt to preſent it in its own peculiar mode. I muſt, in this caſe, have either appeared puſillanimouſly timid in ſhrinking from that open trial to which my contemporaries ſubmit, or ſullenly and ungraciouſly faſtidious.

The chief thing to be regretted in this failure of my attempts is, that having no opportunity of ſeeing any of my pieces exhibited, many faults reſpecting ſtage effect and general impreſſion will to me remain undiſcovered, and thoſe I may hereafter write be of courſe unimproved. Another diſadvantage, perhaps, may preſent itſelf to the mind of my reader; viz. that not having the trial of their merits immediately in proſpect, I may become careleſs or forgetful of thoſe requiſites in the drama that peculiarly refer to the ſtage. But if I know any thing at all of my own character, this will not be the caſe. I ſhall perſevere in my taſk, circumſtanced as I am, with as anxious unremitting an attention to every thing that regards the theatre as if I were there forthwith to receive the full reward of all my labours, or complete and irretrievable condemnation. So ſtrong is my attachment to the

drama of my native country, at the head of which ſtands one whom every Britiſh heart thinks of with pride, that a diſtant and uncertain hope of having even but a very few of the pieces I offer to the public repreſented to it with approbation, when ſome partiality for them as plays that have been frequently read ſhall have put it into the power of future managers to bring them upon the ſtage with leſs riſk of loſs than would be at preſent incurred, is ſufficient to animate me to every exertion that I am capable of making.

But I perceive a ſmile riſing upon the cheek of my reader at the ſanguine calculations of human vanity, and in his place I ſhould moſt probably ſmile too. Let that ſmile, however, be tempered with reſpect, when it is conſidered how much mankind is indebted to this pleaſing but deceitful principle in our nature. It is neceſſary that we ſhould have ſome flattery to carry us on with what is arduous and uncertain, and who will give it to us in a manner ſo kindly and applicable to our neceſſities as even we our own ſelves? How poor and ſtationary muſt the affairs of men have remained, had every one, at the beginning of a new undertaking, conſidered the probability of its ſucceſs with the cool, temperate mind of his reaſonable, unconcerned neighbour?

It is now time to ſay ſomething of the particular plays here offered to the public.

In the firſt I have attempted, in the character of Rayner, to exhibit a young man of an eaſy, amiable

temper, with delicacy of ſentiment and a well principled mind, tempted, in the extremity of diſtreſs, to join with unworthy men in the propoſed commiſſion of a deteſtable deed; and afterwards, under one of the ſevereſt trials that human fortitude can be called upon to endure, bearing himſelf up, not with the proud and lofty firmneſs of a hero, but with the ſtruggles of a man, who, conſcious of the weakneſs of nature within him, feels diffident of himſelf to the laſt, and modeſtly aims at no more than what, being a ſoldier and the ſon of a brave father, he conſiders as reſpectable and becoming. One who aſpires not to admiration but ſhrinks from contempt; and who being naturally brave in the field, and of a light buoyant diſpoſition, bears up throughout with an animation and cheerfulneſs by no means inconſiſtent with a conſiderable degree of the dread of death, when called upon to encounter it with deliberation and certainty. To him I have oppoſed the character of a young man, in whom, though with ſome good affections, there is a foundation of natural depravity, greatly ſtrengthened by the bad education he has received from an abſurdly indulgent mother, brought by his crimes to an untimely end, and meeting it with a very different ſpirit.

Of the characters of the two principal women in this piece, oppoſed to two women of a very different deſcription I ſhall ſay nothing. The ſecond and inferior perſons of the drama I have endeavoured to delineate with ſufficient diſcrimination to

make us feel acquainted with them, though much force or originality is a praiſe which I readily grant they are not entitled to.

I am afraid the varied conduct of the whole, ſometimes gay and even ludicrous, ſometimes tender or diſtreſſing, but ſcarcely at any time ſolemn or dignified, will be diſpleaſing to thoſe who are accuſtomed to admire tragedy in its more exalted form. I flatter myſelf, however, that as I have not, for the ſake of variety, introduced any under-plot nor patched ſcenes unconnected with the main buſineſs, but have endeavoured to make every thing ariſe naturally from the circumſtances of the ſtory, I ſhall not on this ſcore be very much cenſured *.

This play was written many years ago, when I was not very old, and ſtill younger from my ignorance of every thing regarding literature than from my years. This, however, I do not mention as any apology for its defects. A work that cannot be read with approbation unleſs the mind is continu-

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* That part of the ſcene, Act III. in the court of the priſon, where the ſongs of the confined chief of banditti and a ſlight ſketch of his character are introduced, though very appropriate to the place, ſtands looſe from the buſineſs of the play, and may therefore be conſidered as ſuperfluous and contradicting what I have ſaid above. But as it is ſhort, and is a fancy come into my head from hearing ſtories in my childhood of Rob Roy, our Robin Hood of Scotland, I cannot find in my heart to blot it out, though, either on the ſtage or in the cloſet, any body is welcome to do it for me by paſſing it over entirely.

ally referring to the particular circumſtances under which it was written, ought not to be brought before the public, but (when thoſe circumſtances are very extraordinary) as a literary curioſity. Reading over this work, after it had been laid by for ſuch a length of time that it was to me almoſt like the work of a ſtranger, I thought there was ſufficient matter in it, with ſome alterations, to make an intereſting play, not unſuited to the common circumſtances of even our country theatres; and indeed I have altered it ſo conſiderably that full one half of it may be ſaid to be newly written. In the original it was uniformly written in blank verſe, and in many of the ſcenes, particularly thoſe approaching to comic, my reader will readily believe it was ſufficiently rugged and hobbling; I have, therefore, taken the liberty of writing in plain proſe all thoſe parts where I thought blank verſe would be cumberſome and ſtilted. The only ſcenes in the play that remain exactly or nearly as they ſtood in the original are, that between Rayner and the Old Man of the wood, in which I have ſcarcely altered a ſingle word, and that, Act IV. Scene III. between Zaterloo and his mother.

A play, with the ſcene laid in Germany, and opening with a noiſy meeting of midnight robbers over their wine, will, I believe, ſuggeſt to my readers certain ſources from which he will ſuppoſe my ideas muſt have certainly been taken. Will he give me perfect credit when I aſſure him, at the time this play was written, I had not only never read any

German plays, but was even ignorant that ſuch things as German plays of any reputation exiſted? I hope—I am almoſt bold enough to ſay, I know that he will. And that I may not abuſe his faith by ſmuggling any thing under its protection not ſtrictly entitled to it, I muſt inform him that the ſhort ſcene between Rayner and his ſervant Herman which I thought in ſome degree neceſſary to ſhew the character and temper of the maſter, and to intereſt us in his favour before the great action of the piece begins, was entirely introduced in my latter alterations, and is therefore liable to whatever charge of imitation it may ſeem to deſerve, though I have not been ſenſible, in writing it, of having any particular claſs of authors in my mind.

Of the comedy that follows it I ſhall ſay but little. To thoſe who are chiefly accuſtomed, in works of this kind, to admire quick turns of thought, pointed expreſſion, witty repartee, and the ludicrous diſplay of the tranſient paſſing follies and faſhions of the world, this play will have but few attractions. The repreſentation of a few characters, not, I believe, "over-ſtepping the modeſty of nature," who are connected together in a very ſimple plot, carried on throughout with cheerfulneſs, unmixed with any pretenſions to great refinement of ſentiment, or delicate ſtrokes of tenderneſs, is all this piece has to boaſt of: and with no higher pretenſions, the greater proportion of my readers will not, I flatter myſelf, find fault with me for having made it a kind of diviſion or ſtepping-ſtone between

the two tragedies ; where, if they do not enjoy a brilliant ſunſhine, they may at leaſt have a little flickering of the ſunbeams to play upon them as they paſs from one ſombre gloom to another. It has lain by me for many years, and has received a very few inconſiderable alterations.

The laſt play of this volume was written in the hope of being brought out upon our largeſt theatre, enriched as it then was by two actors whoſe noble appearance and ſtrong powers of expreſſion ſeemed to me peculiarly ſuited to its two principal characters. The ſubject of it is taken from Gibbon's account of the ſiege of Conſtantinople by the Turks. It was a ſubject that preſſed itſelf upon me, at a time when I had no thoughts of writing at all, and (if I may uſe the expreſſion) *would* be written upon. The character there diſplayed of Conſtantine Paleologus, the laſt of the Cæſars, a modeſt, affectionate, domeſtic man; nurſed in a luxurious court in habits of indulgence and indolence; without ambition, even without hope, rouſing himſelf up on the approach of unavoidable ruin ; and deſerted by every Chriſtian prince in Europe, deſerted by his own worthleſs and enervated ſubjects, ſupported alone by a generous band, chiefly of ſtrangers, devoting themſelves to him from generous attachment ;—to ſee him thus circumſtanced, nobly fronting the ſtorm, and periſhing as became the laſt of a long line of kings, the laſt of the Romans;—this was a view of man—of noble and dignified exertion which it was impoſſible for me reſiſt, though well

aware that no play I am capable of writing can ever be equal to what ſuch a ſubject deſerves. So much was I pleaſed with thoſe generous ties—may I be permitted to make uſe of a ſcripture phraſe, and ſay, thoſe "cords of a man?" binding together the noble Paleologus and his brave imperial band, that, had I followed my own inclination, delineating thoſe would have been the principal object of the piece. But convinced that ſomething more was requiſite to intereſt a common audience, and give ſufficient variety to the ſcenes, I introduced the character of Valeria, and brought forward the domeſtic qualities of Conſtantine as well as thoſe of the unfortunate prince and beloved leader.

Mahomet and Juſtiniani are the only characters in the piece, Conſtantine excepted, that are not imaginary. The firſt will be found, I hope, to correſpond with the character given of him by the hiſtorian. To alter, for the idle convenience of poetry, conſpicuous, or indeed any characters that have been known in the world, appears to me highly blameable, though in filling up an outline given us by hiſtory we cannot well avoid heightening or diminiſhing the general effect. Juſtiniani, if I well remember (for I have not the hiſtory by me at preſent to refer to), was a noble Genoeſe, who, after a life diſtinguiſhed for military honour, diſgraced himſelf by being the firſt to turn his back when the Turks attacked the breach on the day of the laſt general aſſault, and was the immediate cauſe of the city being taken. He is ſaid after-

wards on this account to have died of a broken heart. I have endeavoured to repreſent him as a proud man with a high ſenſe of honour, rather than natively brave, and therefore particularly punctilious in every thing that concerns the reputation of a ſoldier. To him I have ventured to oppoſe a military character of a very different deſcription, in the commander of the Genoeſe veſſels which ſo gallantly forced their way into the port of Conſtantinople during the ſiege; and if I have dwelt too much on the rough generous gallantry of a brave ſeaman, and given too many alluſions throughout the whole to the dangers and viciſſitudes of a ſeafaring life, my country, which has owed ſo much to brave men of this claſs, will ſtand forth in my defence, and ſay, that a Briton upon this ſubject writes proudly, and therefore is tempted to write profuſely. In the other imaginary characters, particularly that of Othus, I have endeavoured to accord with the circumſtances of the times; for it is to be remembered, that ſlothful and corrupted as the inhabitants of Conſtantinople then were, amongſt them were ſtill to be found the chief remains of ancient literature and refinement *.

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* The character of Othoric, or rather the circumſtance of his death, I have taken from an account I have read ſomewhere, I believe in one of Dr. Moore's Novels, of a Highland ſergeant, who ſaved himſelf by a ſimilar ſtratagem from the torments prepared for him by the American Indians.

Perhaps in the conduct of this tragedy I have sometimes weakened the interest of it by attending too much to magnificence and show. But it was intended for a large theatre, where a play is rather looked at than listened to, and where, indeed, by a great proportion of the audience, it cannot be heard; and though I might now very easily remove that show, yet to place in its stead what it has most probably kept back, would be almost impossible. For that which has probably been prevented by it, should have been woven and incorporated into the original texture of the piece, and cannot afterwards be inserted here and there in streaks and patches. It has also, I am inclined to believe, received some injury from my having had, when I sketched my two chief characters, the actors who I intended should represent them, too much in my thoughts. This is a fault, and I am sensible it is so: but those who have seen and admired the great powers of those actors in the highest line of tragedy, will easily admit that I have not sinned without a strong temptation. I hope also that this, standing alone, as a single offence of the kind, amongst a considerable number of plays which, if I live long enough, my present task will probably increase to, may be forgiven.

I am sensible there is not that strength and compactness of plot; that close connection of events producing one another in this play, which is a great perfection in every dramatic work, and which I am sorry to say is a perfection that is not to be found

in any work of mine that I have hitherto publiſhed. However, I flatter myſelf I have in this inſtance a good excuſe to make. It appears to me that, in taking the ſubject of a poem or play from real ſtory, we are not warranted, even by the prerogatives of bardſhip, to aſſign imaginary cauſes to great public events. We may accompany thoſe events with imaginary characters and circumſtances of no great importance, that alter them no more in the mind of the reader than the garniture with which a painter decorates the barrenneſs of ſome well-known rock or mountain that ſerves for a landmark to the inhabitants of the ſurrounding country. He may clothe its rugged ſides with bruſhwood, and hang a few ſtorm-ſtunted oaks on its bare peaks; he may throw a thin covering of miſt on ſome untoward line of its acclivity, and bring into ſtronger light the bold ſtoried towerings of its pillared cliffs; he may even ſtretch the rainbow of heaven over its gigantic head, but its large and general form muſt remain unaltered. To have made a romantic paſſion for Valeria the cauſe of Mahomet's beſieging the city, would, I believe, have pleaſed the generality of readers, and have made this play appear to them more like what a play ought to be; but I muſt then have done what I conſider as wrong.

It would be impertinent to proceed farther in pointing out the merit, if it has any, or demerit of this tragedy, of which I cannot pretend to be a very clear-ſighted or impartial judge. I leave it, with its companions, to my reader, who will, I doubt not,

peruſe them with reaſonable indulgence, and more than this it would be fooliſh even to deſire. If I find that, upon the whole, theſe plays have given more pleaſure to the public than the reverſe, I ſhall not leſs cheerfully bring forward, at ſome future time, thoſe which remain behind, becauſe their faults ſhall have been fully expoſed to the cenſure they deſerve.

RAYNER:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

RAYNER.

COUNT ZATERLOO, *a worthleſs diſſipated nobleman of ruined fortune, and chief of a band of lawleſs ruined men, like himſelf.*

BERNARD, SEBASTIAN, } *Gentlemen and followers of* Zaterloo.

HARDIBRAND, *an old general.*

MARDONIO, *a monk.*

Old man of the Wood.

OHIO, *a negro attached to the priſon.*

HERMAN, *ſervant to* Rayner.

RICHARD.

BERTRAM.

GOBAS.

Keeper of the Priſon, Clown, Executioners, Turnkey, Jailor, Meſſenger, Landlord, Confeſſor, Crowd, &c.

WOMEN:

ELIZABETH.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO, *mother to* Zaterloo.

MIRA, *a courtezan.*

ALICE, *friend to* Mira.

SCENE,—Germany, *near the frontiers of* Poland *and* Sileſia.

RAYNER.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A noiſe of voices and unruly merriment is heard, whilſt the curtain draws up, and diſcovers* Count Zaterloo, Bernard, Sebaſtian, *and others of their band, ſeated round a table with wine, &c.*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

HA! ha! ha! ha! with all this noiſy mirth,
Should ſome grave ſtranger, on his way miſled,
Now puſh the door a-jar, and look upon us
Thus ſet, what claſs of men ſhould we be deem'd?
A ſet of light hearts, ſnug in fortune's lap,
Who will not go to bed becauſe we may?
Or club of ſharpers, flush'd with full ſucceſs,
New from the ſpoiling of ſome ſimple fool?
Or troop of ſtrolling players, at our eaſe,
After the labours of our kingly ſorrows,
With throats new cool'd at as great charge of wine
As our tough lungs have coſt of lady's tears?

BERNARD.

No, no, thou haſt not hit upon it yet:
He'd take thee for the heir of ſome old miſer,

Treating thy friends, as first fruits of thy kingdom,
With flowing bumpers to the quiet reſt
Of thy good kinſman's ſoul.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes, Bernard, thou ſay'ſt well: and thy dark viſage,
Lank and unſuited to all mirth, would mark thee
The undertaker, who amongſt the gueſts
Had come on matters of his ſable trade,
Grinning a ſtrange, uncomely, jaw-bone ſmile
O'er the near proſpect of his future gains.

SEBASTIAN.

Methinks, at leaſt, in this gay, jolly band,
He ſcarcely would diſcover needy men,
Who better days have ſeen.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Tut, man! thou art too grave; thou art too grave—
Which of you ſung that ſong with merry lay,
Some few nights ſince? Come, let us have it now.

SONG.

Ye who fain would happy be,
Give the hand, and join with me:
They who toil the weary day,
They who bend with locks of grey,
They who tread the beaten way,
Fools who work that we may play,

Fold their weary arms to ſleep,
Come, let us our vigil keep.

Fellows, join, and never fear;
Ye who would be happy, hear.
With the ſober and the meek,
Lighter flies the paſſing week?
In his dwelling warm and ſleek,
Brighter ſmiles the rich man's cheek?
Wiſer things may wiſe men ſay,
But we are wiſer far than they.

Come, light ſpirits, light and free,
Wiſeſt they who fooliſh be.
He who hammers at the pot,
He who brews for every ſot,
He who made my hoſe and coat,
Is a better man I wot;
Yet were we form'd, events declare,
He to work and I to wear.

Miſtreſs of the miſty ſhroud,
O, lovely moon! come from thy cloud.
When thou o'erlook'ſt the ocean's brine,
Ourſelves we view in floods of wine.
Our conſtancy reſembles thine;
Like thee in borrow'd robes we ſhine;
Then let us, in thy kindred light,
Still wake, the rulers of the night.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

It is a ſong of Halbert's, is it not?
He was a ſocial jolly-hearted mate,
And had a knack of making ready rhymes.

BERNARD.

I knew him well: what has become of him?

COUNT ZATERLOO *(pretending not to hear).*

Fill up your glaſs, and let the flaſk go round.

BERNARD.

What has become of Halbert, doſt thou know?

COUNT ZATERLOO *(ſtill pretending not to hear).*

This wine is richly flavour'd, is it not?

BERNARD.

It is.—But Halbert; know ye aught of him?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

The devil take thy question, aſking ſpirit!
For when thou get'ſt a notion by the ſkirt,
Thou, like an Engliſh bull-dog, keep'ſt thy hold,
And wilt not let it go.—
He ſhot himſelf in priſon ſome months ſince:
Now, there's thine anſwer for thee; art thou ſatisfied?

(A deep and long pauſe; then Zaterloo *ſtarts up as if he recollected ſomething.)*

He will be with us ere I've pav'd his way.

SEBASTIAN.

Haſt thou ſome new aſſociate to propoſe?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Know ye the younger branch of Valvo's houſe?
Whoſe valiant father left him but his ſword
And his proud ſpirit, thro' this changeful world
To ſhape his way, with heart as truly tempered
To all the ſofteſt witch'ries of refinement
As e'er own'd cheriſh'd heir of wide domains,
In palace nurs'd.

SEBASTIAN.

I've ſeen him when a youth,
But he ſince then has of a foreign ſtate
The ſoldier been; and had not now returned,
But in the hope, 'tis ſaid, of being heir
To his great uncle's vaſt and rich poſſeſſions,
Of which that villain Hubert has depriv'd him
With treach'rous wiles. Poor heart! he has my pity.
'Tis ſaid a ling'ring fever ſeiz'd upon him
From diſappointment; and I marvel not;
The ſtroke was moſt ſevere.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

And felt more keenly,
For that he left behind him, in the country
To which he now belongs, a gentle maid
And his bethroth'd, with whom he thought to ſhare

His promis'd wealth.
But these things reſt.—Thus driven as we are
To this uncertain, daring courſe of life,
The ſtronger and the more reſpectable
Our band, the greater chance of proſpering.
Our number is too ſmall; and, by my ſoul,
To ſee a mean, plebeian, vulgar knave,
Admitted of our fellowſhip, ſtill rubs
Againſt my nature. Such a man as Rayner
Is precious, and, once gain'd, is ſure and ſteadfaſt.
But few days ſince I met him, dark and thoughtful,
With melancholy and unwonted gait
Slow ſaunt'ring thro' lone, unfrequented paths,
Like one whoſe ſoul from man's obſerving eye
Shrinks gall'd, as ſhrinks the member newly torn
From every ſlighteſt touch. Seeing him thus,
I mark'd him for my man.

BERNARD.

Did'ſt thou accoſt him?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes; when to my greeting,
"Thou ſee'ſt I am unhappy, go thy ways,"
He fretful ſaid, and turn'd. I ſtill perſiſted,
With ſoothing words which thrill'd againſt his heart,
(For in our youthful days we once were playmates,)
Like the ſweet tones of ſome forgotten ſong,
Till, like a pent-up flood ſwoln to the height,
He pour'd his griefs into my breaſt with tears,

Such as the manlieſt men in their croſs'd lives
Are ſometimes forc'd to ſhed,

SEBASTIAN.

And ſpoke he of his love?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Nay, there indeed
He was reſerv'd; but that part of his ſtory,
Which I from ſure authority have learnt,
I ſtill thro' broken words could ſhrewdly read,
Altho' he nam'd it not.

BERNARD.

Haſt thou explain'd to him our courſe of life?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

No, that had been too much: but can'ſt thou doubt,
Suff'ring ſuch wrongs as Hubert's artful baſeneſs
Has put upon him, he will ſcruple long,
Thus circumſtanc'd, to join his arm with ours
In murd'ring the rich villain?

BERNARD *(looking at* Sebaſtian, *who ſhrinks back).*

I pray thee call it ſhooting! that plain word
Still makes Sebaſtian, like a ſqueamiſh dame,
Shrink and look lily-fac'd. To ſhoot a man
As one in battle ſhoots a fronted foe;
As from the tavern's broil, in meaſur'd field,
One ſhoots a friend, is nought:—but that word murder—

It hath a horrid ſound; pray thee, good captain,
Remember 'tis a band of gentlemen
Thou doſt command, and let ſuch gentle phraſe
Fall from thy tongue as gentle ears may ſuit.
(Omnes laughing loud at Sebaſtian.)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Huſh! Rayner is at hand, I hear his ſteps.
Enter Rayner.
I give you welcome, Rayner, with my heart;
Theſe are my friends, of whom I well might boaſt,
But that it ſeems like boaſting of myſelf.
Here, take your place, and join our fellowſhip,
There is but little need of ceremony
With thoſe whom like misfortunes bring together.

RAYNER.

I take my ſeat, honour'd in ſuch a place;
And ſo far to misfortune am indebted,
Which has procur'd it for me. *(Sits down.)*

BERNARD *(drinking to* Rayner).

This do I fill to future fellowſhip:
To that which makes, at fortune's loweſt ebb,
A few brave men united, mock the world
And all its plodding rules; enabling them
Boldly to ſeize their portion of life's feaſt,
Which griping av'rice or unjuſt oppreſſion
Would from them ſnatch, whilſt with inſulting ſcorn
It ſcoffs at poverty and patient want.

RAYNER.

Thou truly ſay'ſt; at leaſt I have obſerv'd
That thoſe who bear misfortunes over meekly
Do but perſuade mankind that they and want
Are all too fitly match'd to be disjoin'd,
And ſo to it they leave them.

BERNARD.

'Tis ever ſo:
Even good men then neglect them; but the baſe,
They, who by mean and undermining arts
To o'ergrown wealth attain, like the aſs's heel
'Gainſt the ſick lion's low and lanken breaſt
Spurn at them.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes, good Bernard, thou ſpeak'ſt truly.
For I myſelf, who, as thou know'ſt right well,
Am not too meekly to misfortune bent,
Have ſomewhat of the worthleſs aſs's kick
Againſt my boſom felt.—'Lone and unarm'd—
Had but one brave companion by my ſide
My anger ſhar'd, full dearly had the knave—
But let it paſs—he had a brave man's curſe,
And that will reſt upon him.

BERNARD.

But, pray thee, Count, tell us the circumſtance,
Thou ſpeak'ſt in myſtery.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

A few days ſince, returning near my home,
Upon a narrow path rais'd from a road
With mud choak'd up, behind me trampling came,
A band of liv'ried raſcals at his heels,
In all his awkward ſtate, a puff'd-up worldling,
And rode me off my way; whilſt looking back,
He turned his head with a malicious grin
At the poor ſpatter'd wretch, who in the mud
Stood ſhowering curſes on him.

RAYNER.

Ay, 'tis the curſed inſolence of wealth
That makes the poor man poor. Thou wert unarm'd?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I was; or by this hand, poor as I am,
I ſhould have ſpent a brace of bullets on him
With much good-will.

RAYNER.

Know'ſt thou the villain's name?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Faith, I'm almoſt aſham'd to tell it thee,
Thou know'ſt him well: he is a rich man now;
His name is Hubert.

RAYNER.

There lives no blacker villain on the earth

Than him who bears it.—But thou know'ſt it all.
When from a diſtant country, where with honour
I earn'd a ſoldier's pittance, the fair promiſes
Of a near kinſman tempted me, and I,
Tho' by my nature moſt incautious,
And little ſkill'd to gain by flatt'ring arts
An old man's love, high in his favour ſtood;
That villain Hubert rous'd his jealous nature
With artful tales of ſlights and heir-like wiſhes,
And covert mock'ry of his feeble age,
Till, in the bitterneſs of changed love,
All his vaſt wealth he did bequeath to him,
And left me here, ev'n in this ſtranger's land,
(For years of abſence makes it ſo to me,)
A diſappointed, friendleſs, unknown man,
Poor and depreſſed, ſuch as you ſee me now.

BERNARD.

Double, deteſted, cruel-hearted villain!

COUNT ZATERLOO *(ſtarting up with affected vehemence).*

By heaven he dies, as I do wear this arm!
(they all ſtart up.)
Defended by a hoſt of liv'ried knaves,
I'd ſeek him out alone.

BERNARD.

Thou ſhalt not go alone; here, heart and hand
We will all join thee in ſo good a cauſe.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

My arm is at thy will.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Take my aid too;
We never can be bold in better cauſe.

THIRD GENTLEMAN (*on receiving a ſign from* Zaterloo).

Then, Sirs, you muſt be ſpeedy with your vengeance,
For I am well inform'd that on to-morrow,
With all his treaſure, for a diſtant province
He will begin his journey towards eve.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Ha! then good fortune leads him to our hands;
How goes he guarded?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

With a ſlender train.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then thanks to fortune's fav'ring ſmiles, which thus,
Whilſt we but ſeek revenge for a friend's wrongs,
So kindly throws into our heedleſs way
The eaſy cure of our neceſſities.
Yes, let us ſeize the greedy glutted villain!

Let us diſgorge him of his ill-got gains!
He long enough has rioted in eaſe,
Whilſt better men have felt the gripe of want.

BERNARD.

Yes, let it be ſo, let the villain die!

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What ſay'ſt thou, Rayner? thou alone art ſilent.

RAYNER.

The wrongs are mine, and if with indignation
They fill your breaſts, in ſtrong deſire of vengeance
Ye well may gueſs I am not far behind:
But there's a law above all human bonds,
Which damps the eager beating of my heart,
And ſays, "do thou no murder."

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Well, clear thy knitted brows, nor look thus ſtrangely.
We both are form'd, my friend, to know like feelings,
Like wants and wiſhes, and from better days
Both are reduced to fortune's loweſt ebb:
And I as well as thou, ſtanding thus ſingly,
Can feed my fancy up with ſtrong conceits
Of what in letter'd lore is virtue term'd,
And bear its darkeſt frowns. There was a time,
When ſharing ev'ry wiſh and ev'ry view
With one of weaker frame and ſofter ſoul;

Yet forced by the dark frowns of adverſe fortune
To live a willing outlaw from her preſence,
Becauſe I could not bear to come before her
A poor deſpiſed man, reft of that comelineſs
And honeſt grace which independence gives,
To bid her throw aſide her flowing robes
And decent ornaments of maiden pride,
Unveil the ſweetneſs of her ſhelter'd beauty
To beating mid-day heats and chilling winds,
And be a wand'ring vagrant by my ſide;—
There was a time, my friend, when, thus beſet,
At view of any means to better fortune,
A ſtronger pow'r had ris'n within my breaſt
And mock'd at law. But, ſtanding thus alone,
I can as well as thou forego the gain
Which this occaſion offers.—Let it paſs!
There is within us, be it ſuperſtition,
Th' unſcann'd opinions from our childhood cheriſh'd,
Or natural inſtinct, ſtill a ſtrong averſion
To ev'ry act of blood. Let us yield to it,
We will not ſtrain our nature from its bent:
We'll do no violent deed.

RAYNER *(catching hold of* Zaterloo *with great agitation).*

O thou haſt mov'd me! thou haſt conjur'd thought!
Wert thou—Wert thou indeed thus circumſtanc'd?
And thy deſerted love; what was her fate?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

She felt not long the cruel ſeparation:

One lovely buſh of the pale virgin thorn,
Bent o'er a little heap of lowly turf,
Is all the ſad memorial of her worth;
All that remains to mark where ſhe is laid.

RAYNER.

Oh! Oh! and was it thus!

COUNT ZATERLOO.

But let us now ſhake off theſe diſmal thoughts,
This hour was meant for ſocial fellowſhip:
Reſume your ſeats, my friends, and, gentle Rayner,
Clear up thy cloudy brows and take thy place.

RAYNER.

I fain would be excus'd.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(gently forcing him to ſit down).*

Nay, no excuſe:
Thou muſt perforce a ſocial hour or two
Spend with us. To ye all, my noble friends,
I fill this cup. *(drinks.)*
——— Bernard, how goes thy ſuit?
Haſt thou yet to thy greedy Lawyer's pocket
Convey'd thy hindmoſt ducat? Ha, ha, ha!
Had he, with arms in hand, ta'en from thee boldly
Half of the ſum, thou would'ſt have call'd him robber.
Ha, ha, ha! *(laughing heartily.)*

BERNARD.

Yes, thou may'ſt laugh:

We nice diſtinctions make.—I had an uncle,
Who once upon a time ———

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I hope, good Bernard,
Thy ſtory will be ſhorter than thy ſuit.

(Rayner, *who has been ſitting in gloomy thoughtfulneſs, without attending to any thing around him, whilſt* Zaterloo *has been keeping an eye of obſervation on him, now riſes up in great agitation to go away.)*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What is the matter, Rayner?

RAYNER.

I am diſturb'd—I know not how I am—
Let me take leave, I pray you.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou ſhalt not quit us thus. What is the matter?

RAYNER.

Queſtion me not: my thoughts are all confus'd:
There is a ſtrong temptation faſten'd on me.
I am not well.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(aſide to* Bernard).

Ay, now it works upon him:
This will do ———
(Aloud and preventing Rayner *from going.)*
If thou'rt unwell, art thou not with thy friends?

RAYNER.

If ye indeed are friends, not ſpirits enleagu'd
To force me to my ruin, let me go —
Let me go to my home.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What, doſt thou call a bare unfurniſh'd chamber,
With griping Landlord clam'ring in thine ears
For what he knows thou canſt not give, thy home?

RAYNER *(ſighing deeply)*.

I have no other.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Stay thou here with us:
In the next chamber thou ſhalt reſt a while.
Lead him, my kind Sebaſtian, by the hand:
There is a ſort of woman's kindlineſs
About thy nature which befits thee beſt
To be a ſick man's friend. I'll follow you.
(Exit Rayner, *leaning on* Sebaſtian,)—*turning about to his friends triumphantly as they go off.)*
I have ſecur'd my man. *(A voice heard without.)*
But hark! a voice without! It is my mother's.
Secure the lettic'd door. Plague on her kindneſs
To haunt me here! I have forgot my promiſe.
(To Bernard.) Make faſt the lettic'd door and anſwer for me.

BERNARD *(after faſtening a door of lettice work through which the* Counteſs *is ſeen)*.

Who's there? what want ye?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(without)*.

I want my ſon: I pray you is he here?

BERNARD.

He is not here.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(without)*.

Nay, ſay not ſo, I think he is with you.
O tell him I have ſat theſe three long hours,
Counting the weary beatings of the clock,
Which ſlowly portion'd out the promis'd time
That brought him not to bleſs me with his ſight.
If he is well, why does he thus forget?
And if he is not, as I fear he is not,
Tell me the worſt, and let me be with him
To ſmooth his couch and raiſe his ſickly head.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(aſide to* Bernard).

Tell her it is unſeemly for a mother
To run about like a new fooliſh wife.

BERNARD.

If you complain thus movingly, fair widow,
We ſhall believe you ſeek a ſecond huſband
In lieu of your good ſon; and by my truth
It were a better errand.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

O baſe of thought, as moſt unbleſt of ſpeech!
My ſon is not with you: it cannot be:
I did him wrong to ſeek him in ſuch company.

BERNARD *(ſpeaking loud after her as ſhe retires from the door.)*

Not far from hence, there is a nightly meeting
Of worthy, ſober, well-diſpoſed folks,
Who once a week do offer up their prayers
And chant moſt faintly hymns till morning dawn,
It is more likely you will find him there.

(Omnes laughing.)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

She's gone.

BERNARD.

Yes, yes; come from thy hiding place.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Now what a moſt unreaſonable woman!
Thinks ſhe, thus ripen'd to theſe manly years,
That I muſt run whene'er my finger aches
To lean my ſilly head upon her lap?
'Tis well I have no wife.

BERNARD.

Ay, ſo it is.
There is no pleaſing thoſe high legal dames
With endleſs claims upon a man's regard:
Heaven ſave us from them all!

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Well, this I drink to precious liberty:

He is a fool indeed who parts with that.
(A loud voice and buſtling heard without.)
What's this comes next to plague us?

BERNARD.

'Tis Mira's voice.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Haſt thou not ſent to ſay, that urgent bus'neſs
Detains me from her banquet?

BERNARD.

I have; I ſent to her a written meſſage.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Keep faſt the door and I will ſtand conceal'd.
(Conceals himſelf, and Mira *appears thro' the latticed door.)*

MIRA *(without)*.

Where is Count Zaterloo? Let me paſs on.

BERNARD.

Affairs of greateſt conſequence detain him,
My beauteous Mira; and I needs muſt ſay
That now you may not paſs.——
He's much concern'd: early upon the morrow
He will be with you.

MIRA.

Upon the morrow! prate not thus to me!
He ſhall to-night go with me where I liſt,

Or never ſee my face again. To morrow!
Open the door I ſay! this weakly barrier
Shall not oppoſe my way.
(Beating violently againſt the door.)

COUNT ZATERLOO *(aſide to* Bernard).

Faith I believe we muſt e'en let her in,
She may do ſome raſh thing, if we perſiſt.
(Bernard *unbolts the door;* Zaterloo *comes from his concealment; and enter* Mira, *ſuperbly dreſs'd, and in a violent paſſion.)*

MIRA.

Is this the way you keep your promiſes?
Is this your faith? is this your gallantry?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Mira, my gentle love, I pray thee hear me!
I ſent to tell thee bus'neſs of great moment.

MIRA.

Yes, yes! I have receiv'd your ſcurvy meſſage.
And well I know that ev'ry paltry matter
Is cauſe ſufficient for neglecting me.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou know'ſt to be from thee is painful to me.

MIRA.

So it ſhould ſeem, by taking ſo much care
To comfort ye the while. *(pointing to the wine, &c.)*
You do your bus'neſs jovially, methinks.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou art too warm: accuſe me as thou wilt
Of aught but want of love.

MIRA.

O thou deceitful man! I know thee well:
Thou talk'ſt of love and thou wouldſt break my heart.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Indeed I am to blame, my gentle love;
Yet be not thus: in token of forgiveneſs
This friendly cup receive, and ſmile upon me.
(Offering her a cup, which ſhe daſhes to the ground.)

MIRA.

Off with thy hateful gifts! nought from thy hands
Will I receive; I ſcorn thy offering.
Ev'n the rich robe thou haſt ſo often promis'd me:
Ay and ſo oft forgot, ſo I muſt call it,
I would now ſcorn, ſince thou doſt ſlight my love.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Indeed, my Mira, thou ſhalt have that robe
Before two days be paſt: I ſwear to thee.
Then do not look ſo frowningly, my love;
I know thou haſt a ſoft relenting nature;
Smile my forgiveneſs.

MIRA.

O thou provoking man! thou know'ſt full well

It is thyſelf and not thy gifts I prize:
Thou know'ſt too well how my fond doating heart
Is moved with the ſoft witch'ry of thy tongue;
Yet thou wilt vex me thus, and break my heart.
Oh! 'tis too much! *(pretending to burſt into tears.)*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I cannot ſee thee weep: what would'ſt thou have?

MIRA.

I will have nought, unleſs you go with me.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I cannot now, for I have urgent bus'neſs.

MIRA.

Then ſtay, and never ſee my face again.
O that ſome friendly hand would end my days,
Since I have lived to ſee me thus deſpis'd.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(aſide to* Bernard*)*.

Bernard, I think I muſt e'en go with her.
See thou to Rayner: I will ſoon return.
(Aloud.) Then let us go, my love, thou doſt compel me.
Thy hand, ſweet Mira. *(Exeunt* Zaterloo *and* Mira.*)*

BERNARD.

Well, gentle friends, it is bleſt liberty
Our noble chief enjoys. I muſt to Rayner.

Stay if you will, and keep ye merry here.
(Omnes.) No, we are tir'd, we will retire to reſt,
(Exeunt.

SCENE II. Rayner's *Lodgings.*

Enter RAYNER *alone.*

RAYNER.

Be ſtill, ye idle thoughts that toſs me thus,
Changing like reſtleſs waves, but ever dark;
Or one of you above his fellows riſe,
And bear a ſteady rule. Adverſity!
Thou'ſt come upon me like an ambuſh'd foe
In armed ſtrengh. If I had mark'd thy courſe,
I might have girt myſelf for thine approach,
While diſtant ſtill, and met thee like a man.
But when new-fetter'd in a lover's bonds,
And dazzled too with hope's deceitful brightneſs,
Cam'ſt thou like a thick cloud of deſart ſand,
And in dark night o'erwhelm'd me: deepeſt night,
Thro' which no waking viſion ever gleams,
Save thy grim viſage only, loathly want,
In all thy varied forms of miſery.
My night, my day dreams, ah! how are ye changed,
Since in the new-betroth'd, the lover's fancy,
Ye wove your ſheeny maze of mingled thoughts,
Like ſparkling dew-webs in the early Sun!
(after a pauſe.)
Elizabeth! methinks ev'n now I ſee her,
As in the horrors of my laſt night's dream,
When, after following her thro' flood and fire,

She turn'd to me, and her weak arms ſtretch'd forth.
But ah! how changed, how pale, and ſpent, and keen!
As if already blighting poverty,
That portion which her love muſt ſhare with me,
Had marr'd—ceaſe, ceaſe, baſe thought, it ſhall not be!

(Enter Herman *with a knapſack on his back, as if prepared for a journey.)*

What, my good Herman, art thou ſo ſoon ready?

HERMAN.

Yes, my dear maſter, but if you think it too ſoon, I will not go to-day. Nay if it were not that you force me to go, I ſhould as ſoon have thought of deſerting my friend (pardon my boldneſs, ſir) in a wild wood amongſt ſavages, as leaving you here in this ſtrange place in the ſtate you are in at preſent. Pardon my boldneſs, ſir.

RAYNER.

Thou haſt no boldneſs to pardon, Herman: thou art well entitled to call thyſelf my friend; there is not one amongſt thoſe who have borne that name, who would have done more for me than thou haſt done.

HERMAN.

Ah ſir!

RAYNER *(aſſuming a look of cheerfulneſs).*

Fy, do not look ſo ſadly upon me, man; thanks

to thy good nurſing and the good broth thou haſt made me, I am getting ſtrong again: and as for the ſtate of my coffers, for which thou ſo much concerneſt thyſelf, do not let that diſturb thee. My tide of means is, to be ſure, pretty well ebb'd juſt now; but ſome wind or other will ſpring up to ſet it a flowing again. In the mean time thou knoweſt I would travel alone: perhaps I may ramble about a little while myſteriouſly, like the wandering Jew or ſome of thoſe lonely philoſophers which thy old ſtories tell thee about, and there is no knowing what I may find out to do me good. The philoſopher's ſtone, thou knoweſt, may as well fall into my hands as thoſe of any other wanderer, ſo pray thee, man, dont look ſo ruefully upon me.

HERMAN.

Ah, my dear maſter! there is ſomething here that hangs heavy on my heart, and ſays, if I leave you now, ſome evil will befal you: I beſeech you let me ſtay with you, I ſhall find ſomething to do in this town, and I can ———

RAYNER.

No, no, no! Speak of this no more—we have argued this point already. And what is this which thou putteſt down ſo ſlyly upon the table? *(taking up a little packet which* Herman *has put ſecretly upon the table.)* Ha! the jewels I have given thee in room of thy wages! out upon it! thou wilt make me angry with thee now, and it grieves me to be angry

with thee. Put it up, put it up: I command thee to do it; and thou knoweſt I have not often uſed this ſtern word.

HERMAN.

O no, ſir! You have not indeed uſed it; and I ſhall never meet with another maſter like you.

RAYNER.

Thou wilt meet, I hope, my dear Herman, with a far better maſter than I have been to thee, though not with one for whom thou wilt do ſo much kindly ſervice as thou haſt done for me; and for this cauſe perhaps, thou wilt not love him ſo much. God proſper thee for it, wherever thou goeſt!—Take this embrace and bleſſing for all thou haſt done for me. Farewel! farewel! thou muſt de gone now; indeed thou muſt. God bleſs thee, my good Herman.

(Puſhing Herman *gently off the ſtage, who wipes his eyes and ſeems unwilling to go.)*

Exit Herman.*)*

RAYNER *(alone)*.

Now am I left alone: there's no one near me
That e'er hath loved or cared for me. Methinks
I now can better look i'th' ſurly face
Mine alter'd ſtate, and bear to be in want.
I am alone, and I am glad of it.
Alas! chang'd heart of mine! what is that ſtate
Which gives to thee ſuch thoughts?—Elizabeth—
At it again! This ſtrong idea ſtill!

I am diſtracted when I think of this,
Therefore I muſt not, if I would be honeſt.
Thoſe men—or are they men or are they devils?
With whom I met laſt night; they've faſten'd on me.
Fell thoughts, which, tho' I ſpurn them, haunt me ſtill.
Would I had never met them!
Here comes my landlord with his ſurly face
Of debts and claims, and ev'ry irkſome thing.

(Enter Landlord *with a letter.)*

Good morrow, Landlord.

LANDLORD.

I thank you, ſir; I am glad to hear you call me Landlord, for I began to be afraid you had miſtaken me for your Hoſt.

RAYNER.

I underſtand you well enough, and indeed I have proved your patience, or rather your impatience, much longer than I wiſhed. You have a letter in your hand.

LANDLORD *(giving it).*

There, Sir; if it bring you the news of any good luck, I ſhall be glad of it.

RAYNER *(agitated).*

From Elizabeth.—Good morning—good morning to you.

LANDLORD.

Read it, ſir, and ſee if it bring you any good news; it is time now to look for ſome change in your favour.

RAYNER.

I cannot open it whilſt thou art here. Have the goodneſs at leaſt not to ſtand ſo near me.

LANDLORD.

So I muſt not occupy a place in my own houſe, forſooth, for fear of offending the good folks who do me the honour to live in it. *(retires to the bottom of the ſtage muttering to himſelf.)*

RAYNER *(after opening the letter with great emotion and reading it).*

O what is this!———
Abandon'd by the friend with whom ſhe liv'd,
And coming here to join me with all ſpeed!
O God! O God! *(ſinks down upon a chair in violent agitation.)*

LANDLORD. *(running up to him).*
What is the matter now?

RAYNER.

Begone, begone! I cannot anſwer thee.

Enter COUNT ZATERLOO.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Ha, Rayner! how is't with thee? thou look'ſt wildly.
(*To* Landlord.) Speak to me, friend: he heeds not what I ſay:
Has any new misfortune happen'd to him?

LANDLORD.

I fear there has, ſir.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Rouſe thee up, brave Rayner,
A friend is come to thee.

RAYNER *(ſtarting up)*.

Ha, is it thee?
Com'ſt thou upon me now, my tempter? now,
Ev'n in my very moment of diſtraction?
Thou know'ſt thy time: ſome fiend has whiſper'd to thee.
Ay, ay! ſay what thou wilt.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou'rt ſurely mad; I came not, on my word,
To ſay aught to thee which an honeſt ear
Might not receive; nor will I even ſpeak,
Since it ſo moves thee ——

RAYNER *(interrupting him eagerly).*

Ah, but thou muſt!
Thou muſt ſpeak that, which, in its darkeſt hour,
Puſh'd to extremity, 'midſt ringing dizzineſs
The ear of deſperation doth receive,
And I muſt liſten to it.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What, ſay'ſt thou ſo? 'Tis well *(aſide)*, but be more prudent,
We are o'erheard. *(looking ſuſpiciouſly to* Landlord, *who has retired a few paces behind.)*
Come with me to my lodgings;
There wait my friends; all things ſhall be concerted:
Come with me inſtantly; the time is precious.

RAYNER *(in a tone of deſpair, claſping his hands vehemently).*

Ay, ay! I'll go with thee.

(Exeunt Count Zaterloo *and* Rayner: *Manet* Landlord.

LANDLORD *(coming forward).*

What's this I've overheard? Is this devil now going to tempt the poor diſtreſſed young man to do ſome foul deed in his neceſſity?—I have tempted him too, with my hard-hearted murmuring about the few wretched pounds that he owes me. I'll run after him and ſay, I don't care whether he pay me or not. *(running to the door and then ſtopping*

ſhort.) No, no! ſoftly, ſoftly! I dare ſay it is only ſome ſharping buſineſs they have got on hand, ſuch as needy Gentlemen are ſometimes forced to follow: I have got my conſcience newly cleared off at confeſſion laſt week, and I am to make an offering next holy-day to the ſhrine of our patron St. Bernard; this is no time, goodſooth, to loſe ſuch a ſum upon ſcruples. *(Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A wood: dark night, with a pale gleam of diſtant lightning ſeen once or twice on the edge of the horizon. Advancing by the bottom of the ſtage, a few moving lights, as if from lanthorns, are ſeen, and at the ſame time ſeveral ſignal calls and loud whiſtles are heard, with the diſtant anſwer returned to them from another part of the wood: Enter* Count Zaterlóo, Rayner, Sebaſtian, *and others of the band, armed, and a few of them bearing in their hands dark lanthorns. It is particularly requeſted if this play ſhould ever be acted, that no light may be permitted upon the ſtage but that which proceeds from the lanthorns only.*

COUNT ZATERLOO *(to* Sebaſtian).

They muſt be near: didſt thou not hear their call?

SEBASTIAN.

Methought I did; but who in this wild wood
May credit give to either eye or ear?
How oft we've been deceiv'd with our own voices,
From rocky precipice or hollow cave,
'Midſt the confuſed ſound of ruſtling leaves,
And creaking boughs, and cries of nightly birds,
Returning ſeeming anſwer!

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Rayner, where ſtandeſt thou?

RAYNER.

Here, on thy left.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Surely theſe wild ſcenes have depriv'd thy tongue
Of ſpeech. Let's hear thy voice's ſound, good man,
To ſay thou art alive. Thou'rt marvellous ſilent:
Didſt thou not alſo hear them?

RAYNER.

I know not truly if I did. Around me,
All ſeems like the dark mingled mimicry
Of fev'riſh ſleep; in which the half-doubting mind,
Wilder'd and weary, with a deep-drawn breath,
Says to itſelf, "Shall I not wake?"

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Fy, man!
Wilt thou not keep thy ſoldier's ſpirit up?
To-morrow's ſun will be thy waking time,
And thou wilt wake a rich man and a free.

RAYNER.

My waking time!—no, no! I muſt ſleep on,
And have no waking.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Ha! does thy mind miſgive thee on the brink?

RAYNER.

What paſſes in my mind, to thee is nothing,

If my hand do the work that's faſten'd on me.
Let's paſs to it as quickly as thou wilt,
And do not ſpeak to me. ——

Enter Bernard *and others, armed,* &c.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Well met, my friends! well met! for we
deſpair'd
Of ever ſeeing you.

SEBASTIAN.

Yet we have heard your voices many times,
Now calling us on this ſide, now on that,
As tho' you had from place to place ſtill ſkipp'd,
Like Will o'the Wiſp, to loſe us on our way.

BERNARD.

We've far'd alike: ſo have we thought of you.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Have you diſcover'd aught of thoſe we ſeek?

BERNARD.

No; all is ſtill, as far as we have travers'd:
No gleaming torch gives notice from afar,
Nor trampling hoofs ſound on the diſtant road.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then muſt we take again our ſev'ral routs,
That haply we may learn, ere he approach,

What ſtrengh we have to face, and how he travels:
And that we may not wander thus again,
This aged oak ſhall be our meeting place;
Where having join'd, we'll by a ſhorter compaſs
Attack them near the centre of the wood.

SEBASTIAN.

The night grows wond'rous dark: deep-ſwelling guſts
And ſultry ſtillneſs take the rule by turns;
Whilſt o'er our heads the black and heavy clouds
Roll ſlowly on. This ſurely bodes a ſtorm.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I hope the devil will raiſe no tempeſt now,
To ſave this child of his, and from his journey
Make him turn back, croſſing our fortunes.

BERNARD.

Fear not!
For, be the tempeſt of the devil's raiſing,
It will do thee no harm. To his good favour
Thou haſt (wrong not thy merit) claims too ſtrong.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then come on, friends, and I ſhall be your warrant!
Growl ſky and earth and air, ne'er trouble ye;
They are ſecure who have a friend at court.

SCENE II. *A different part of the wood, wild and ſavage: the* Scene *ſtill darken'd, and a ſtorm of thunder and lightning, accompanied with hail.*

Enter RAYNER.

RAYNER.

I know not where theſe men have ſhelter'd them.
I've miſs'd their ſignal: this loud ſtunning din
Devours all other ſounds. Where ſhall I go?
Athwart this arch of deep embodied darkneſs,
Swift ſhiv'ring lightnings glare, from end to end
Mantling the welkin o'er in vivid flames;
Or from aloft, like ſheeted cataracts
Of liquid fire, ſeem pour'd. Ev'n o'er my head
The ſoft and miſty-textur'd clouds ſeem chang'd
To piles of harden'd rocks, which from their baſe,
Like the up-breaking of a ruin'd world,
Are hurl'd with force tremendous. Patt'ring hail
Beats on my ſhrinking form with ſpiteful pith:
Where ſhall I ſhelter me? Ha! thro' the trees
Peers, near at hand, a ſmall but ſettled light:
I will make quickly towards it; perhaps
There may be ſome lone dwelling in the wood.

(Exit.

SCENE III. *The inſide of a cave: an* Old man *diſcover'd ſitting by a ſmall table made of coarſe planks, with a lamp burning dimly upon it: the thunder heard ſtill very loud.*

OLD MAN.

Doth angry heav'n ſtill roll its loudeſt peal

O'er th' unbleſt head! Ay, thro' its deaf'ning roar
I hear the blood-avenging Spirit's voice,
And, as each furious turmoil ſpends its ſtrength,
Still ſounds upon the far-receding ſtorm
Their diſtant growl.
'Tis hell that ſends its fire and devils up
To lord it in the air. The very wind,
Riſing in fitful eddies, horribly ſounds,
Like burſts of damn'd howlings from beneath.
Is this a ſtorm of nature's elements?
O, no, no, no! the blood-avenging ſpirits
Ride on the madding clouds: there is no place,
Not in the wildeſt den, wherein may reſt
The unbleſt head. *(Knocking heard without.)*
——— Ha! knocking at my door!
(Pauſes and liſtens much alarmed: knocking heard ſtill louder.)
Say, who art thou that knock'ſt ſo furiouſly?
Think'ſt thou the clouds are ſparing of their din,
That thou muſt thunder too? Say who thou art,
And what thou would'ſt at ſuch an hour as this,
In ſuch a place?

RAYNER *(without)*.

I am a lone, and tempeſt-beaten traveller,
Who humbly begs a ſhelter from the night.

OLD MAN.

Then art thou come where gueſt yet never enter'd.

RAYNER *(without).*

I do not aſk admittance as a gueſt.
Would'ſt thou not ſave a creature from deſtruction,
Ev'n a dumb animal? unbar the door,
And let me lay my body under ſhelter.

(Old man *makes no anſwer; the ſtorm heard very loud.)*

RAYNER *(without).*

If thou'rt a man in nature as in voice,
Thou canſt not ſit at peace beneath thy roof,
And ſhut a ſtranger out to the rude night.
I would, ſo circumſtanced, have ſhelter'd thee.

OLD MAN.

He tries to move me with a ſoothing voice.
(Aſide.)
(*Aloud.*) Thou art a knave; I will not let thee in.

RAYNER *(without).*

Belike I am, yet do not fear my wiles:
All men are honeſt in a night like this.

OLD MAN.

Then I will let thee in: whoe'er thou art,
Thou haſt ſome ſenſe, ſhouldſt thou lack better things. *(He unbars a ſmall door, and* Rayner *enters much ruffled and exhauſted by the ſtorm and without his hat.)*

RAYNER.

I'm much beholden to thee.

OLD MAN.

No, thou art not.

RAYNER.

The violence of the night muſt plead my pardon,
For breaking thus unaſk'd upon your reſt.
But wand'ring from my way, I know not how,
And loſing my companions of the road,
Deep in the 'tangled wood the ſtorm o'ertook me;
When ſpying thro' the trees this glimm'ring lamp,
And judging it, as now it doth appear,
The mid-night taper of ſome holy man,
Such as do oft in dreary wilds like this
Hold their abode, I ventur'd onwards.

(Old Man, *offering him bread and dried fruits.*)

OLD MAN.

Perhaps thou'rt hungry.

RAYNER.

I thank you gratefully.

OLD MAN.

There is no need.
Fall to, if thou haſt any mind to it.

RAYNER.

I thank you truly, but I am not hungry.

OLD MAN.

Perhaps thou'rt dainty: I've naught elſe to give thee.

RAYNER.

I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf, if any food
Could bear ſuch value in my eſtimation,
As that it ſhould to me a ſtraw's worth ſeem,
To feed on homelieſt, or on richeſt fare.

OLD MAN.

So much the better. *(They ſit down.)*

RAYNER.

If I may gueſs from all I ſee around me,
The luxuries and follies of the world
Have long been baniſh'd here.

(Old Man *looks ſternly at* Rayner, *who looks fixedly upon him again, and both remain for ſome time ſilent.)*

OLD MAN.

Why look'ſt thou ſo?
What is there in my face that thou would'ſt ſcan?
I'm old and live alone: what would'ſt thou know?

RAYNER.

I crave your pardon, and repreſs all wiſhes
That may diſturb you.

OLD MAN.

The night wears on, let us both go to reſt.

RAYNER.

I thank you, for in truth I'm very tir'd.

OLD MAN *(pointing to his couch).*

There is thy place.

RAYNER.

Nay, I am young; the ground ſhall be my couch.
I will not take your bed.

(Old Man *then gives* Rayner *a cloak, which he wraps about him, laying himſelf down in a corner of the cave. The ſtorm now heard at a diſtance. After walking up and down for ſome time, the* Old Man *goes cloſe up to* Rayner, *who appears aſleep, and looks earneſtly upon him*; Rayner *opening his eyes ſeems ſurpriſed.)*

OLD MAN.

Be not afraid, I will not cut thy throat.

RAYNER *(ſtarting half up from the ground).*

Nay, heaven ſuch deed forfend! I fear thee not:
I can defend myſelf. *(Graſping his ſword.)*

OLD MAN.

Be not offended; but methought thy looks
Did ſeem as tho' thou wert afraid of me.
Reſt thou in peace—reſt thou in peace, young man:
I would not do thee harm for many worlds.

(Rayner *goes to reſt again, ſtill keeping his drawn ſword in his hand. The* Old Man *goes to reſt likewiſe, but ſhortly after ſtarts from his couch in great agitation.)*

OLD MAN.

It is mine hour of horror: 'tis upon me!
I hear th' approaching ſound of feet unearthly:
I feel the pent-up vapour's chilly breath
Burſt from the yawning vault:—It is at hand.
(Turning towards the door as if he ſaw ſome one enter.)
Ha! com'ſt thou ſtill in white and ſheeted weeds,
With hand thus pointing to thy bloody ſide?
Thy grave is deep enough in hallow'd ground!
Why com'ſt thou ever on my midnight reſt?
What doſt thou want? If thou haſt power, as ſeeming,
Stretch forth thine arm and take my life; then free
From fleſhy fears, in nature as thyſelf,
I'll follow thee to hell, and there abide
The ſearing flames: but here, upon this earth,
Is placed between the living and the dead
An awful myſtery of ſeparation,
Which makes their meeting frightful and unhallow'd.
(In the vehemence of his agitation he throws out his arm and ſtrikes it againſt Rayner, *who alarmed at his ravings has left his reſting-place, and ſtolen ſoftly behind him.)*
Ha! what art thou? *(ſtarting and turning round to* Rayner.)

RAYNER.

Nay, thou with briſtling locks, looſe knocking joints

And fixed eyeballs ſtarting in their ſockets,
Who ſpeak'ſt thus wildly to the vacant ſpace,
Say rather, what art thou.

OLD MAN.

I am a murderer. (Rayner *ſtarts back from him and drops his ſword.*)
Ah! wherefore doſt thou ſtare ſo ſtrangely on me?
There's no blood on me now! 'tis long ſince paſt.
Haſt thou thyſelf no crime, that thus from me
Thou doſt in horror ſhrink?

RAYNER.

Moſt miſerable man!

OLD MAN.

Thou truly ſay'ſt, for I am miſerable.

RAYNER.

And what am I? *(After a diſturbed pauſe.)*
The ſtorm did rage and bellow thro' the air,
And the red lightning ſhiver'd:
No traveller would venture on his way
In ſuch a night.—O, bleſſed, bleſſed ſtorm!
For yet it hath not been, and ſhall be never.
Moſt Great and Merciful! ſav'd from this gulf,
May I to thee look up?—No: in the duſt—
(As he bows himſelf to the earth, and is about to kneel, the report of fire-arms is heard without, and he ſtarts up again.)
'Tis done!—O, it is done!—the horrible act!
(Exit, beating his forehead violently.)

OLD MAN.

What may this be? ſome band of nightly robbers
Is near my cave, committing violent deeds.
Thy light, weak flame, ſhall not again betray me,
And lure unwelcome viſitors. *(Puts out the lamp; and after a dark pauſe, enter* Count Zaterloo *ſupporting himſelf on* Firſt Gentleman, *who bears a dark lantern, which he ſets down on the ground, and faſtens the door of the cave carefully behind them.)*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I am wounded grievouſly: who would have thought
Of ſuch a powerful guard of armed men
Attending on his journey. He is ſlain:
Did'ſt thou not ſee him fall?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes; we have kill'd our bird, but loſt the eggs.
Fortune has play'd us falſe, yet we've eſcap'd:
Here we may reſt; this cave is tenanted
With ſome lone being whom we may controul,
And take poſſeſſion—— *(diſcovering* Old Man.)
——— Something living here!
What art thou?

OLD MAN.

I am a thing no better than yourſelves.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The better then for thee that thou art ſo.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Conduct me onward: I perceive an opening
Which leads, I gueſs, to ſome more cloſe receſs:
Lay me down there for I am very faint.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I will obey thee,—Come thou too, old man;
Not from my ſight one moment muſt thou budge.
Come on: for, mark me well, ſhould'ſt thou betray us,
Tho' fetter'd down with chains in grated dungeons,
Our arms were long enough to reach to thee.

(Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *Another part of the wood; at a diſtance, on the back ground, are diſcovered two men watching a dead body by the light of a torch ſtuck between the boughs of a tree; the ſtage otherwiſe perfectly dark.*

Enter GOBUS *on the front of the ſtage.*

GOBUS.

I fear they will all eſcape from us amongſt theſe 'tangled paths and vile perplexing thickets. A man cannot get on half a dozen paces here but ſome curſed clawing thing catches hold of him, and when he turns round to collar his enemy, with a good hearty curſe in his mouth, it is nothing but a

thorn-bush or a briar after all. A plague upon't! I'll run no more after them if they should never be taken.—Who's there?

Enter a COMPANION.

COMPANION.

What, are you here, Gobus? I thought you had been in search of the robbers.

GOBUS.

So I was; but what does it signify? they have all got the start of us now, and we can scarcely expect they will have the civility to wait till we come up with them.

COMPANION.

Ay, Ay, Gobus, that is a lazy man's argument. Why, there was one of them seen by Bertram not five minutes since, with his head uncovered, stalking strangely amongst the trees like a madman, and he vows he will follow the scent through every path of the wood but he will have him, either alive or dead.

GOBUS.

But if he be a young stout robber, he may knock Bertram on the head in the mean time, and relieve him from the obligation of keeping his vow.

COMPANION.

Never fear that: his bugle-horn is by his side, and as soon as he comes up with him he will give

his companions notice, and they will run to his assistance.

GOBUS.

Well, well, let them manage it the best way they can, and let us join our friends yonder, who keep watch by the body; there is good store of dried sticks in that corner, we may make a fire and warm ourselves till they return.

(Horn heard without.)

COMPANION.

Ha! there is the signal, and close at hand too. He has caught his man and wants assistance; let us run to him, or the villain will escape.

(Exeunt Companion *and* Gobus, *who follows rather unwillingly, whilst the men who were watching the body run eagerly to the front of the stage.)*

FIRST MAN.

It sounded to the right hand of us; let us strike into this path. *(Horn sounds again.)*

SECOND MAN.

Ay, there it sounds again; it is to this hand of us, but it is so dark there is no finding our way.

FIRST MAN.

We have been so long by the torch-light that the darkness is darker to us: run back and

fetch the light with thee. *(Several other attendants from different parts of the wood run acroſs the ſtage, calling to one another with great eagerneſs, whilſt the* Second Man *running back again to the bottom of the ſtage, ſnatches the torch from the tree, and comes forward with it.*

Enter BERTRAM, GOBUS, *and others, with* Rayner *as their priſoner.)*

GOBUS *(ſpeaking as they enter).*

Here is light! here is light, friends! bring him near it, I pray you, that we may ſee what kind of a fiſh we have caught in our net. Ay, juſt as I ſaid now, as hang'd a looking villain as ever ſcowl'd thro' the grates of a dungeon. See what a wild murderous look he has with his eyes! this is the very man that did the deed I warrant ye. Let us pull the cords faſter round his arms tho': if he get one of his miſchievous hands looſe again, there is no knowing which of our brains he may knock out firſt.

FIRST MAN.

It will never be thine, I am ſure, thou'rt always ſafe when the knocking out of brains is going on.

GOBUS.

As I'm a ſinner he'll get one of his hands looſe if we do not take care of him. *(Attempting to tighten the cords round* Rayner's *arms.)*

BERTRAM *(putting him away with indignation)*.

For ſhame, man, he is bound tight enough; I will not ſuffer thee to lay a finger upon him: and as for the hang'd face thou talk'ſt of, alack a day! it goes to my heart to ſee him, ſuch a goodly-looking gentleman, for ſuch I'll be ſworn, he is.

GOBUS.

Ay, no doubt! it is ever thus with thee. Thou did'ſt never in thy life ſee a thief go to the gallows without crying out, "alack a day! what a fine looking fellow it is!" Ay, and if he could but make ſhift to howl out half a verſe of a pſalm along with his father confeſſor, thou wert ſure to knotch him down upon thy holiday tables as one of the new made ſaints. Ay, there be no ſuch great ſaints now-a-days as thoſe who paſs, with the help of a Dominican, thro' the hangman's hands to the other world; he beats your pope and your cardinals all to nothing in ſmuggling a ſinner cleverly in by the back door to heaven.

BERTRAM.

So much the better for thee; it is the only chance thou haſt of ever getting there.—Stand off, I ſay (*puſhing* Gobus *away*), and do not ſtare thus upon the priſoner! art thou not aſham'd to ſtare in an unhappy man's face after this faſhion? we don't know what hard fate may have brought him into theſe circumſtances (*to the attendants*). Move on: we are loſing time here.

GOBUS.

What, will you not pinion him more closely?

BERTRAM.

No, beast! I would rather flea the skin off that fool's back of thine than gall a hair's breadth of his body *in a softened voice to* Rayner). Speak, Sir, if the rope hurts your arms; we will not use you cruelly.

RAYNER.

What did'st thou say to me? was there kindness in thy voice?

BERTRAM.

Yes, Sir, there was kindness in it. Do the ropes hurt your arms? if they do we will loosen them a little.

RAYNER.

I wist not that my arms were bound: but if thou hast any kindness in thee, give me a drink of water when thou can'st get it, for my mouth is very parched.

BERTRAM.

Yes, Sir, that you shall not want, tho' I should pay gold for it.—Move on, comrades: the night is far advanced, and we must guard the prisoner and the dead body of our master back to the city before the morning break.

(Exeunt.)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

A ſpacious court with a magnificent building in front: a great concourſe of people are diſcovered as if waiting in expectation of ſome ſight.

FIRST CROWD.

THE court is marvellouſly long of breaking up; I'm tir'd of waiting; and yet I don't like to loſe the ſight, after having ſtay'd ſo long for it.

SECOND CROWD.

I fear it will go hard with the young man.

THIRD CROWD.

I fear it will, poor gentleman!

WOMAN CROWD.

Ah! poor young man! it is an awful end.

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, I remember well the laſt criminal that was condemned here; a ſtrong-built man he was, tho' ſomewhat up in years. O, how pale he look'd as they led him out from court! I think I ſtood upon this very ſpot as he paſſed by me; and the fixed

ſtrong look of his features too—It was a piteous ſight!

THIRD CROWD.

Ah, man! but that was nothing to the execution. I paid half a dollar for a place near the ſcaffold; and it would have made any body's heart drop blood to have ſeen him when he lifted up the handkerchief from his eyes, and took his laſt look of the day-light, and all the living creatures about him.

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, man, that a human creature ſhould be thus thruſt out of the world by human creatures like himſelf; it is a piteous thing!

(Enter a man from the court.)

OMNES *(eagerly)*.

What news? what news of the priſoner?

MAN.

He has juſt finiſhed his defence, in which he has acquitted himſelf ſo nobly, ſetting off his words too with ſuch a manly grace, that it is thought by every body he will be ſet free.

SECOND CROWD.

Indeed! I ſhould not have expected this now; ſpoke ſo nobly ſay'ſt thou?

FIRST CROWD.

Yes, yes, noble blood makes noble ſpeaking.

WOMAN CROWD.

Well, and is it not beſt ſo? poor young man! I'm ſure I'm glad of it.

FIRST CROWD.

And an't I ſo too, milk-fac'd doll! tho' I hate to be kept ſo long ſtaring for nothing. I wonder what brought me here in a murrain to it!

SECOND WOMAN.

La! then we ſhan't ſee him paſs by with the chains upon his legs.

FIRST CROWD.

No, no! nor nothing at all. Come let me paſs, I have been too long here. *(Preſſing through the crowd to get out.)*

WOMAN CROWD.

O, you tread upon my toes!

FIRST CROWD.

Devil take you and your toes both! can't you keep them out of people's way then!

WOMAN CROWD.

Plague take it! what had we all to do to come here like ſo many fools!

(Enter a ſecond Man from the court.)

SECOND CROWD.

Here comes another man from the court *(calling to the man)*. Ho, friend! is he acquitted yet?

SECOND MAN.

Nor, nor like to be; the judge is juſt about to pronounce ſentence upon him, but ſomething came ſo cold over my heart I could not ſtay to hear it.

(Several of the mob climb eagerly up upon the walls of the building, and look in at the windows.)

CROWD *(below)*.

What do you ſee there, ſirs!

CROWD *(above)*.

The judge is juſt riſen from his ſeat, and the black ſignal is lifted up.

OMNES.

Huſh! huſh! and let us liſten! *(A deep pauſe.)*

CROWD *(above)*.

Sentence is paſt now.

CROWD *(below)*.

God have mercy on him!

THIRD CROWD.

I would not wear my head upon his ſhoulders for all the prince's coffers.

FIRST CROWD.

Alas! poor man! he is but a youth.

SECOND CROWD.

Yet he muſt be cut off in the flower of his days.

FIRST CROWD.

It is an awful thing!

WOMAN CROWD.

Ah! but a youth, and a goodly-looking youth too, I warrant ye.

SECOND WOMAN.

Alack a-day! many a one falls into crimes, but all do not pay the forfeit.

THIRD CROWD.

Ha! who comes this way ſo fair and ſo gentle in her mein; thus toſs'd and 'tangled amidſt the preſſing crowd, like a ſtalk of wild flower in a bed of nettles? Come, clear the way there, and let the lady paſs.

Enter ELIZABETH *attended by* RICHARD, *the crowd making way for her.*

ELIZABETH.

I'm much obliged to you.

RICHARD.

We thank you, good Sirs! My miſtreſs and I are both ſtrangers in this town, and the neareſt way to your beſt inn, as we are told, is thro' this

court; but the crowd is so great I think we had better turn back again.

ELIZABETH.

What is the meaning of this eager multitude,
So gather'd round the entry to this palace?

THIRD CROWD.

It is no palace, madam, but a public court: there is a gentleman of noble birth who is just now condemned to death for murder, and we are waiting to see him led forth from his trial; you had better stop a little while and see the fight too.

ELIZABETH.

O, no! I'm come here in an evil hour!—A gentleman of noble birth—Alas! but that the crime is murder 'twere most piteous.

OMNES *(eagerly)*.

There he comes! see, see! there he comes!

Enter RAYNER, *fettered and guarded from the court, followed by* BERTRAM *and others, and advances slowly towards the front of the stage, the crowd opening and making a lane for him on every side.*

FIRST CROWD.

What a noble gait he has even in his shackles!

SECOND CROWD.

Oh! oh! that such a man should come to this!

ELIZABETH *(after gazing eagerly at the distant prisoner)*.

Merciful heaven! the form has strong resemblance.

RICHARD.

Sweet miſtreſs, be not terrified with forms;
'Tis but a diſtant form.

ELIZABETH.

Ha! then it ſtrikes thee too!—Merciful God!

RICHARD.

Patience, dear madam! now as he advances,
We ſhall be certified of the deception.
Rayner is not ſo tall as this young man,
Nor of a make ſo ſlender; no, nor yet——

ELIZABETH.

Peace, peace! for he advances. *(Watching the priſoner as he advances with a countenance of diſtracted eagerneſs, till he comes near her; then, uttering a loud ſhriek, falls down, and is ſupported by* Richard *and ſeveral of the crowd.)*

OFFICER *(conducting* Rayner).

What fainting maid is this obſtructs the way?
Let not the crowd ſo cloſely preſs around her.
Open the way, and let the pris'ner paſs.

RAYNER *(upon the crowd opening and diſcovering* Elizabeth).

O, ſight of miſery! my Elizabeth!
The laſt and felleſt ſtroke of angry heaven
Falls on this curſed head.

OFFICER.

What may this mean? let us paſs on: we ſtop not
Whate'er betide.

RAYNER.

Nay, but you do: for here there is a power
Stronger than law or judgment. Give me way:
It is permitted me by ev'ry ſenſe
Of human ſympathy, were I ev'n bound
With chains tenfold enlock'd. *(Bending over* Elizabeth.)
Thou lovelieſt, and thou deareſt! O thou part
Of my moſt inmoſt ſelf! art thou thus ſtricken?
Falls this ſtroke on thee? *(Kneeling down and endeavouring to ſupport her, but finding himſelf prevented by his chain.)*
Is there not ſtrength in the ſoul's agony
To burſt e'en bands of iron. *(Trying furiouſly to burſt his fetters, but cannot; then with a ſubdued voice)*
Am I indeed a baſe condemned wretch,
Cut off from ev'ry claim and tie of nature?
(Turning to the officer.)
Thou who doſt wear the law's authority,
May it not be permitted for the love
Of piteous charity?—Shall ſtrangers' hands
Whilſt I am thus—O, do not let it be!

OFFICER.

No, no! move on: it cannot be permitted.

RAYNER *(fiercely roused).*

What, say'st thou so? *(Turning to the crowd.)*
——————Ye who surround me too,
Each with the form and countenance of a man,
Say ye 'tis not permitted?
To you I do stretch forth these fetter'd hands,
And call you men: O, let me not miscall you!

VOICES FROM THE CROWD.

Fie, on't! unbind his hands, unbind his hands,
And we will stand his sureties.

BERTRAM *stepping forward in a supplicating posture to the officer).*

Do but unbind his hands a little space,
And shoot me thro' the head if he escape.
My arm secured him; be my recompense
This one request.

OFFICER *(to* Bertram).

Go to; thou art a brave man but a weak one.
(To the guard) Move on: we halt no longer.

CROWD.

By all good saints we stand by the brave Bertram,
And he shall be unshackled. *(Menacingly.)*

OFFICER.

Soldiers, present your muskets to these madmen,
And let *them* speak; the pris'ner halts no longer;
Move on. *(A tumult between the crowd and the guard, and* Rayner *is forced off the stage by the soldiers.)*

FIRST CROWD.

Shame light on ſuch hard-hearted cruelty!

SECOND CROWD.

If there had been but ſix of us with arms in our hands he durſt not have put this affront upon us.

THIRD CROWD.

But who looks to the lady? She is amongſt ſtrangers it ſeems, and has only this poor old man to take care of her.

OMNES.

We will take care of her then; we will take care of her: ay, and ſhe ſhall be waited upon like an empreſs.

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, ſo ſhe ſhall, let the coſt be what it will. I am only a poor cobler, God knows, yet I will pawn the laſt awl in my ſtall but ſhe ſhall be waited upon like an empreſs. See! ſee! ſhe begins to revive again.

ELIZABETH *(opening her eyes with a heavy ſigh).*

Is it all vaniſh'd? 'twas a dreadful viſion!
(Looking on the crowd around her.)
O, no! the crowd is here ſtill—it is real;
And he is led away—horrible! horrible!
(Faints again, and is carried off the ſtage by Richard *and the crowd.)*

SCENE II. *A square court, surrounded on all sides by the gloomy walls of a prison, the windows of which are narrow and grated, and the heads of one or two of the prisoners seen looking ruefully through the grates.*

Enter HARDIBRAND, *and looks round him for some time without speaking.*

HARDIBRAND.

Gloomy enough, gloomy enough in faith!
Ah! what a wond'rous mass of dreary walls,
Whose frowning sides are reft in narrow slips
As I have seen full oft some sea-worn cliff,
Pierc'd with the murky holes of savage birds.
Ah! here the birds within are clipt o' wing,
And cannot fly away.

(Enter OHIO *with a tankard in his hand, crossing the stage.)*

Holla, my friend! I pray thee not so fast;
Inform me, if thou canst, where I may find
The keeper of the prison.

OHIO.

Know you what prince you speak to? saucy knave!
I'll have thee scorch'd and flead, and piece-meal torn,
If thou dost call me friend.

HARDIBRAND.

Good words at least; I meant thee no offence.
I see thou hast a tankard in thy hand,

And will not queſtion thy high dignity.
Softly; here's money for thee. *(Giving him money.)*

OHIO.

Silver pieces!
He! he! he! he! haſt thou got more of them?

HARDIBRAND.

Nay, thou art greedy; anſwer firſt my queſtion;
Tell me at which of all theſe gloomy doors
I needs muſt knock to find out the chief jailor.
Thou look'ſt like ſome fetch-carry to the priſoners;
Doſt underſtand me?

OHIO.

Ay, there's the place, go knock at yonder door.

HARDIBRAND *(after knocking).*

This door is cloſe nail'd up, and cannot open.

OHIO *(grinning maliciouſly, and pointing to another door.)*

No, thou art wrong; it is the door hard by,
With thoſe black portals. (Hardibrand *knocks at the other door.)*
Knock a little louder.

HARDIBRAND *(after knocking ſome time).*

A plague upon't! there is no one within.

OHIO *(ſtill grinning maliciouſly).*

No, thou art wrong again, it is not there;
It is that door upon the other ſide.
(Pointing to the oppoſite wall.)

HARDIBRAND.

What, doſt thou jeſt with me, malicious varlet
I'll beat thee if thou tell'ſt me falſe again.

OHIO.

Negroes be very ſtupid, maſter friend.

Enter the KEEPER *of the Priſon.*

KEEPER *(to* Ohio).

Thou canker-worm! thou black-envenom'd toad!
Art thou a playing thy malicious tricks?
Get from my ſight, thou pitchy viper, go!
(Exit Ohio.)

HARDIBRAND.

What black thing is it? it appears, methinks,
Not worth thine anger.

KEEPER.

That man, may't pleaſe you, Sir, was born a prince.

HARDIBRAND.

I do not catch thy jeſt.

KEEPER.

I do not jeſt, I ſpeak in ſober earneſt;
He is an Afric prince of royal line.

HARDIBRAND.

What ſay'ſt thou! that poor wretch who ſneaketh yonder
Upon thoſe two black ſhanks? *(Pointing off the ſtage.)*

KEEPER.

Yes, even he:
When but a youth, ſtol'n from his noble parents,
He for a ſlave was ſold, and many hardſhips
By ſea and land hath paſs'd.

HARDIBRAND.

And now to be the baſe thing that he is!
Well, well, proceed.

KEEPER.

At laſt a ſurly maſter brought him here,
Who, thinking him unfit for further ſervice,
As then a feſt'ring wound wore hard upon him,
With but a ſcanty ſum to bury him,
Left him with me. He ne'ertheleſs, recover'd;
And tho' full proud and ſullen at the firſt,
Tam'd by the love of wine which ſtrongly tempts him,
He by degrees forgot his princely pride,

And has been long eſtabliſhed in theſe walls
To carry liquor for the priſoners.
But ſuch a curſed, ſpite-envenom'd toad!——

HARDIBRAND.

Out on't! thou'ſt told a tale that wrings my heart
Of royal line; born to command, and dignified
By ſufferings and dangers paſt, which makes
The meaneſt man ennobled: yet behold him;
(Pointing off the ſtage.)
How by the wall he ſidelong ſtraddles on
With his baſe tankard!—O, the ſneaking varlet!
It makes me weep to hear his piteous tale,
Yet my blood boils to run and cudgel him.
But let us on our way.

KEEPER.

You are a noble ſtranger, as I gueſs,
And wiſh to be conducted thro' the priſon.
It is an ancient building of great ſtrength,
And many ſtrangers viſit it.

HARDIBRAND.

It is indeed a place of ancient note.
Have you at preſent many criminals
Within theſe walls?

KEEPER.

Our number is, thank God! reſpectable,
Though not what it has been in better days.

HARDIBRAND.

In better days!—Well, do thou lead the way.

(As they are about to go off the ſtage, they are ſtopped by a voice ſinging from one of the higheſt windows.)

SONG.

Sweetly dawns the early day,
Riſe, my love, and come away:
Leave thy grim and grated tower,
Bounding walls, and ſtep-dame's lower;
'Doñ thy weeds and come with me,
Light and happy are the free.

No fair manſion hails me lord,
Dainties ſmoke not on my board;
Yet full careleſs by my ſide,
Shalt thou range the foreſt wide;
Tho' finer far the rich may be,
Light and happy are the free.

HARDIBRAND.

Alas, poor ſoul! I would that thou wert free!
What weary thrall is this that ſings ſo ſweetly?

KEEPER.

A reſtleſs, daring outlaw;
A fellow who hath aw'd the country round,
And levied contributions like a king,

To feaſt his jolly mates in wood and wild;
Yea, been the very arbiter of fortune,
And as his freakiſh humors bit, hath lifted
At one broad ſweep the churl's ſav'd ſtore to leave it
In the poor lab'rer's cot, whoſe hard-worn palm
Had never chuck'd a ducat 'gainſt its fellow.

HARDIBRAND.

'Tis a brave heart! has he been long confined?
But liſt! he ſings again.

SONG.

Light on the hanging bough we'll ſwing,
Or range the thicket cool,
Or ſit upon the bank and ſing,
Or bathe us in the pool.

HARDIBRAND.

Poor pent up wretch! thy ſoul roves far from home.

SONG.

Well, good-man time, or blunt or keen,
Move thee ſlow or take thy leiſure,
Longeſt day will bring its e'en,
Weary lives but run a meaſure.

HARDIBRAND.

'Tis even ſo, brave heart, or blunt or keen,
Thy meaſure has its ſtint.

Enter BERTRAM *from one of the doors of the priſon.*
I think thou haſt the air of an old ſoldier:
(To Bertram *as he is hurrying paſt him.)*
Such, without greeting, never paſs me by.
Ha, Bertram! is it thee?

BERTRAM.

What, mine old General?

HARDIBRAND.

Yes, and mine old ſoldier.
How doſt thou, man? how has it far'd with thee
Since thou haſt left the ſervice?

BERTRAM.

I thank your honour; much as others find it;
I have no cauſe to grumble at my lot.

HARDIBRAND.

'Tis well, but what's the matter with thee now?
Thine eyes are red with weeping, and thy face
Looks ruefully.

BERTRAM.

I've been to viſit, here, a noble youth,
Who is condemn'd to die.

HARDIBRAND.

A noble youth!

BERTRAM.

Yea, a ſoldier too.

HARDIBRAND.

A ſoldier!

BERTRAM.

Ay, your honour, and the Son
Of a moſt gallant ſoldier.

HARDIBRAND.

But he is innocent?

BERTRAM.

He is condemn'd.

HARDIBRAND.

Shame on it! were he twenty times condemn'd,
He's innocent as are theſe ſilver'd locks.
(Laying his hand vehemently on his head.)
What is his name?

BERTRAM.

Rayner.

HARDIBRAND.

Ha! ſon to my old comrade, Rayner!
Out on the fools! I would as ſoon believe
That this right hand of mine had pilfer'd gold

As Rayner's ſon had done a deed of ſhame.
Come, lead me back with thee, for I muſt ſee him.

BERTRAM.

Heav'n bleſs your honour! O, if by your means
He might have grace!

HARDIBRAND.

Come, let us go to him.

BERTRAM.

Not now, an' pleaſe you: he is now engaged
With one moſt dear to him. But an hour hence
I will conduct you to his cell.

HARDIBRAND.

So be it.
Mean time, ſtay thou with me, and tell me more
Of this unhappy youth: I have a mind,
With the good keeper's leave, to view the priſon.

(Exeunt.

Enter MIRA *and* ALICE *by oppoſite ſides, both muffled up in cloaks and their faces conceal'd.)*

MIRA *(ſtopping* Alice).

Nay, glide not paſt me thus with muffled face:
'Tis I, a viſitor to theſe grim walls,
On the ſame errand with thyſelf. How goes it
With our enthralled colleague? doth he promiſe
Silence to keep in that which touches us
Of this tranſaction, for the which he's bound?

ALICE.

He is but half perſuaded ; go thyſelf
And uſe thy arts—huſh, here's a ſtranger near us.

Enter a Man *who gives a letter myſteriouſly to* Mira, *and upon her making a ſign to him, retires to the bottom of the ſtage whilſt ſhe reads it.*

What read'ſt thou there, I pray thee, that thy brows
Knit thus ungraciouſly at ev'ry line ?

MIRA.

Know'ſt thou that I muſt doff my ſilken robes,
Deſpoil my hair of its fair ornaments,
And clothe me in a gown of palmer's grey,
With clouted ſhoon and pilgrim's ſtaff in hand
To bear me o'er rude glens and dreary waſtes
To ſhare a ſtony couch and empty board,
All for the proving of my right true love
For one in great diſtreſs. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !
So doth this letter modeſtly requeſt :
I pray thee read it.

ALICE *(reading the letter).*

" A deadly wound rankles in my ſide, and I have no ſkilful hand to dreſs it, and no kind friend to comfort me. I am laid upon the cold earth, and feel many wants I never knew before. If thou haſt any love for me, and as thou haſt often wiſh'd to prove that love, come to me quickly : but conceal thyſelf in the coarſe weeds of a Pilgrim ; my life is a forfeit to the law if any one ſhould diſcover where

I am. A friend in diſguiſe will give into thy hands this letter, and conduct thee to thy miſerable Zaterloo." *(returning the letter.)* And what ſay'ſt thou to this?

MIRA.

I have in truth, upon my hands already
Troubles enough; this is, thou know'ſt, no time
To take upon me ruin'd men's diſtreſſes.

ALICE.

But 'tis thyſelf haſt brought this ruin on him:
'Twas thy extravagance.

MIRA.

Thou art a fool!
His life's a forfeit to the law: 'tis time,
Good time, in faith! I ſhould have done with him.
Why doſt thou bend theſe frowning looks on me?
How many in my place would for the recompence
Betray him to the officers of juſtice?
But, I, thou know'ſt right well, deteſt all baſeneſs,
Therefore I will not.

ALICE.

Huſh, huſh! thou ſpeak'ſt too loud:
Some one approaches.

Enter COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(to* Mira.)

I pray you, Madam, pardon this intruſion;
Tracing your ſteps, I have made bold to follow you.

I am the mother of an only ſon,
Who for theſe many days I have not ſeen:
I know right well naught is conceal'd from you
Of what concerns him; let me know, I pray you,
Where I may find my child.

MIRA.

Madam, you ſpeak to one who in his ſecrets
Has ſmall concern.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Nay, now, I pray you, do not keep it from me:
I come not with a parent's ſtern rebuke:
Do tell me where he is, for love of grace:
Or, if you will not, ſay if he is ſick,
Or if he is diſtreſs'd with any want.
Do, for love's ſake! I have no child but him.

MIRA *(giving her the letter).*

There, Madam; this is all I know of him.
'Twas yonder ſtranger gave it to my hand;
(Pointing to the man.)
We need not interrupt you with our preſence;
And ſo good day. *(Exeunt* Mira *and* Alice.)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(after reading the letter).*

Alas, my ſon! and art thou low and wounded?
Stretch'd on the cold ground of thy hiding place
In want and fear? Oh art thou come to this!
Thou who didſt ſmile in thy fair op'ning morn,
As cherubs ſmile who point the way to heaven.

And would'ſt thou have a ſtranger come to thee?
Alas! alas! where can thy aching head
So ſoftly reſt as on a parent's lap?
Yes, I will wrap me in the Pilgrim's weeds,
Nor ſtorm nor rugged wild ſhall bar my way.
And tho' declining years impair my ſtrength,
Theſe arms ſhall yet ſupport thy feeble frame,
When fairer friends deſert thee.
(*To the* Meſſenger, *beckoning him to come forward.*)
Good friend, this is no place to queſtion thee!
Come with me to my home.

(*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

The inſide of the Priſon: Rayner *and* Elizabeth *are diſcovered ſitting ſorrowfully by one another in earneſt diſcourſe.*

RAYNER.

Thou ſayeſt well, my ſweet Elizabeth;
In this I have againſt thy love offended.
But in the brightneſs of fair days, in all
The careleſs gaiety of unruffled youth,
Smiling like others of thy ſex, I loved thee;
Nor knew that thou wert alſo form'd to ſtrive
With the braced firmneſs of unyielding virtue
In the dark ſtorms of life—alike to flouriſh
In ſunſhine or in ſhade.—Alas! alas!
It was the thoughts of ſeeing thee—but ceaſe!
The die is caſt; I'll ſpeak of it no more:
The gleam which ſhews to me thy wond'rous excellence
Glares alſo on the dark and lowering path
That muſt our way divide.

ELIZABETH.

O no! as are our hearts, one is our way,
And cannot be divided. Strong affection
Contends with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
I will unto thee cling with ſtrength ſo terrible,
That human hands the hold will ne'er unlock.

RAYNER.

Alas, my love! theſe are thy words of woe,
And have no meaning but to ſpeak thy woe:
Dark fate hangs o'er us, and we needs muſt part.
The ſtrong affection that o'ercometh all things,
Shall fight for us indeed, and ſhall o'ercome:
But in a better world the vantage lies
Which it ſhall gain for us; here, from this earth
We muſt take different roads and climb to it,
As in ſome pitileſs ſtorm two 'nighted travellers
Loſe on a wild'ring heath their 'tangled way,
And meet again.

ELIZABETH.

Ay, but thy way, thy way, my gentle Rayner—
It is a terrible one.
Oh fleſh and blood ſhrinks from the horrid paſs!
Death comes to thee, not as he viſiteth
The ſick man's bed, pillow'd with weeping friends:
O no! nor yet as on the battle's field
He meets the blood-warm'd ſoldier in his mail,
Greeting him proudly.—Thou muſt bend thy neck,
This neck round which mine arms now circled
cloſe
Do feel the loving warmth of youthful life:
Thou muſt beneath the ſtroke—O horrid! horrid!

RAYNER *(ſupporting her from ſinking to the ground).*

My dear Elizabeth, my moſt belov'd!
Thou art affrighted with a horrid picture

By thine own fancy trac'd; look not upon it:
All is not dreadful in the actual proof
Which on th' approach frowns darkly. Rouſe thy
ſpirit;
And be not unto me at this dark puſh
My heavieſt let; thou who ſhould'ſt be my ſtay.
(She groans heavily.)
What means that heavy groan? I'll ſpeak its mean-
ing,
And ſay, that thou to nature's weakneſs haſt
The tribute paid, and now wilt rouſe thyſelf
To meet with noble firmneſs what perforce
Muſt be; and to a lorn and luckleſs man,
Who holds in this wide world but thou alone,
Prove a firm, gen'rous, and heart-buoyant mate,
In the dark hour. Do I not ſpeak it rightly?

ELIZABETH.

Thou doſt, thou doſt! if nature's weakneſs in me
Would yield to the heart's will.
(Falling on his neck in a burſt of ſorrow.)

Enter Father MARDONIO.

MARDONIO.

My children, ye have been in woeful conference
Too long: chide not my zeal that hither brings me
To break upon it. On you both be ſhed
Heav'n's pitying mercy!

RAYNER.

Amen, good Father! thou doſt call us children

With a moſt piteous and kindly voice:
Here is a daughter who in this bad world
Will yet remain to want a father's care;
Thus let me form a tie which ſhall be ſacred;
(*Putting* Elizabeth's *hand into* Mardonio's.)
She has no parent.

Enter KEEPER *of the Priſon.*

What brings thee here? we would be left in peace.

KEEPER (*to* Rayner).

I am by a right noble ſtranger urged,
Who ſays he has in many a rough compaign
Serv'd with your valiant father in the wars,
To let him have admittance to your preſence.
Bertram conducts him hither.

RAYNER.

Serv'd with mine honour'd father! and thus circumſtanc'd,
Now comes to ſee his ſon! Well, be it ſo:
This is no time for pride to winch and rear,
And turn its back upon the patt'ring hail,
Bearing the thunder's ſhock. Let it e'en be:
Admit him inſtantly. (*Calling him back.*)
——— Nay, ere thou goeſt,
What is he call'd?

KEEPER.

The Gen'ral Hardibrand.

RAYNER.

An honour'd name. (*Exit* Keeper.
Retire, my love: (*to* Elizabeth.)
I cannot bear to have thy woes expoſed
Before a ſtranger's gaze.

(*She retires with* Mardonio *to an obſcure part of the Priſon at the bottom of the Stage.*)

Enter HARDIBRAND *and* BERTRAM.

HARDIBRAND (*to* Bertram: *ſtopping ſhort as he enters, and gazing upon* Rayner, *who is turned away from them and looking after* Elizabeth.
It is the ſon of Rayner: in his form
And face, tho' thus half turn'd from us, I ſee
His father. Still a ſoldier and a gentleman
In ev'ry plight he ſeem'd. A clown or child
Had ſworn him ſuch clad in a woollen rug.
(*Advancing to* Rayner.)
Young ſoldier, I did know your gallant father;
Regard me not as an intruding ſtranger.

RAYNER.

I thank you, courteous ſir: in other days
Such greeting to my heart had been moſt welcome.
A gallant father and condemned ſon
May in the letter'd regiſters of kindred
Alliance have; but in the mind's pure record,
They no relation bear: let your brave friend
Still be to you as one who had no ſon.

HARDIBRAND.

No, boy; that ſentiment beſpeaks thy blood.
Heed not thoſe fetter'd hands: look in my face,
Look in my face with the full confidence
Of a brave man; for ſuch I'll ſwear thou art.
Think'ſt thou that I am come to viſit thee
In whining pity as a guilty man?
No, by the rood! if I had thought thee ſuch,
Being the ſon of him whoſe form thou wear'ſt,
I ſhould have curs'd thee. Thou by mis'ry preſs'd,
Haſt ſtrongly tempted been, I know thy ſtory:
Bertram has told it me: and ſpite of courts,
And black-rob'd judges, laws, and learn'd deciſions,
I do believe it as I do my creed.
Shame on them! is all favour and reſpect
For brave and noble blood forgotten quite?

RAYNER.

Ah, do not fear! they will remember that,
And nail ſome ſable trappings to my coffin.

HARDIBRAND.

I would that to their grave and pompous chairs
Their aſſes' ears were nail'd! Think they that men,
Brave men, for thou thyſelf—What corps I pray thee
Didſt thou belong to in thy Prince's ſervice?

RAYNER.

The firſt diviſion of his fourth brigade
Was that in which I ſerv'd.

HARDIBRAND.

Thou haſt companion been to no mean men.
Thoſe ſix brave officers of that diviſion,
Upon the fam'd redoubt, in his laſt ſiege,
Who did in front o' th' en'my's fierceſt fire
Their daring lodgement make, muſt needs of courſe
Be known to thee.

RAYNER.

I knew them well; five of them were my friends.

HARDIBRAND.

And not the ſixth?

RAYNER.

He was, alas! my greateſt enemy;
To him I owe theſe bonds.

HARDIBRAND.

A curſe light on his head, brave tho' he be!

RAYNER.

O curſe him not, for woes enough already
Reſt on his wretched head.
(Bowing low and putting his hand on his head.)

HARDIBRAND.

Ha! thou thyſelf,—thou wert thyſelf the ſixth!
Thank heav'n for this! Then let them if they will
Upon a thouſand ſcaffolds take thy life,

And ſpike thy head a thouſand feet aloft;
Still will I ſay thy father had a ſon.
(Ruſhing into his arms.)
Come to my ſoldier's heart, thou noble bird
Of a brave neſt!—Muſt thou indeed be pluck'd
And caſt to kites? By heav'n thou ſhalt not die!
Shall ſuch a man as thou art from his poſt
Be ſham'd and puſh'd for one raſh deſp'rate act?
It ſhall not be, my child! it ſhall not be!

RAYNER *(ſmiling)*.

In faith, good Gen'ral, could your zeal prevent it,
I am not yet ſo tir'd of this bad world,
But I could well ſubmit me to the change.

HARDIBRAND.

I'll with all ſpeed unto the Governor,
Nor be diſcourag'd, tho' he loudly prate
That grace and pardon will but leave at liberty
The perpetrators of ſuch lawleſs deeds
To do the like again, with ſuch poor cant.
(Elizabeth, *who has been behind backs, liſtening eagerly to their converſation, and ſtealing nearer to them by degrees in her eagerneſs to hear it, now ruſhes forward, and throws herſelf at* Hardibrand's *feet.)*

ELIZABETH.

We aſk not liberty; we aſk but life.
O grant us this, and keep us where they will,
Or as they will. We ſhall do no diſquiet.
O let them grant us life, and we will bleſs them!

RAYNER.

And would'ſt thou have me live, Elizabeth,
Forlorn and ſad, in lothly dungeon pent,
Kept from the very uſe of mine own limbs,
A poor, loſt, caged thing?

ELIZABETH.

Would not I live with thee? would not I cheer thee?
Would'ſt thou be lonely then? would'ſt thou be ſad?
I'd clear away the dark unwholeſome air,
And make a little parlour of thy cell.
With cheerful labour eke our little means,
And go abroad at times to fetch thee in
The news and paſſing ſtories of the day.
I'd read thee books: I'd ſit and ſing to thee:
And every thing would to our willing minds
Some obſervation bring to cheer our hours.
Yea, ev'n the varied voices of the wind
O' winter nights would be a play to us.
Nay, turn not from me thus, my gentle Rayner!
How many ſuffer the extremes of pain,
Ay, lop their limbs away, in loweſt plight
Few years to ſpend upon a weary couch
With ſcarce a friend their ſickly draughts to mingle!
And doſt thou grudge to ſpend thy life with me?

RAYNER.

I could live with thee in a pitchy mine;

In the cleft crevice of a ſavage den,
Where coils the ſnake, and bats and owlets rooſt,
And cheerful light of day no entrance finds.
But would'ſt thou have me live degraded alſo;
Humbled and low? No, liberty or nought
Muſt be our boon.

HARDIBRAND.

And thou ſhalt have it too, my noble youth:
Thou haſt upon thy ſide a better advocate
Than theſe grey hairs of mine. (*To* Elizabeth.)
Bleſs that fair face! it was not made for nothing.
We'll have our boon; ſuch as befits us too.
No, hang them if we ſtoop to halving it!
(*Taking her eagerly by the hand.*)
Come with me quickly; let us loſe no time:
Angel from heaven thou art, and with heav'ns power
Thou'lt plead and wilt prevail.

RAYNER.

In truth thou wilt expoſe thyſelf, my love,
And draw ſome new misfortune on thy head.
(*Endeavouring to draw her away from* Hardibrand.)

ELIZABETH (*to* Hardibrand).

What new misfortune? can they kill thee twice?
We're tardy: O move quickly! loſe no time.

HARDIBRAND.

Yes, come, and Bertram here will guide our way:
His heart is in the cauſe.

BERTRAM.

Yes heart and ſoul, my Gen'ral. Would my zeal
Could now make ſome amends for what thoſe hands
Againſt him have unwittingly committed.
O that the felleſt pains had ſhrunk their nerves
Ere I had ſeiz'd upon him!

RAYNER.

Ceaſe, good Bertram!
Ceaſe to upbraid thyſelf. Thou didſt thy duty
Like a brave man, and thou art in my mind
Not he who ſeiz'd, but he whoſe gen'rous pity
Did, in my fallen ſtate, firſt ſhew me kindneſs.
(Bertram *kiſſes his hand.*)
Go go! they wait for thee.

BERTRAM.

They ſhall not wait. Would that we were return'd,
Bearing good tidings!

HARDIBRAND.

O fear it not, my heart ſays that we ſhall.
(*Exeunt* Elizabeth, Hardibrand *and* Bertram.
Manent Rayner *and* Mardonio.)

MARDONIO.

Hope oft, my ſon, unbraces the girt mind,

And to the conflict turns it loosely forth,
Weak and divided. I'm disturb'd for thee.

RAYNER.

I thank thee, Father, but the crime of blood
Your governor hath ne'er yet pardon'd; therefore
Be not disturb'd for me; my hopes are small.

MARDONIO.

So much the better. Now to pious thoughts
We will direct—Who comes to interrupt us?

Enter the TURNKEY.

RAYNER.

It is the turnkey; a poor man who, tho'
His state in life favours not the kind growth
Of soft affections, has shewn kindness to me.
He wears upon his face the aukwardness
And hesitating look of one who comes
To ask some favour; send him not away.
(*To* Turnkey) What dost thou want, good friend?
out with it, man!
We are not very stern.

TURNKEY.

Please you, it has to me long been a priv'lege
To shew the curious peasantry and boors,
Who from the country flock o' holy days,
Thro' his strait prison bars, the famous robber,
That over-head is cell'd; and now a company
Waits here without to see him, but he's sullen,
And will not shew himself. If it might please you

But for a moment oppoſite your grate
To ſtand, without great wrong to any one,
You might paſs for him, and do me great kindneſs.
Or the good Father there, if he be willing
To doff his cowl and turn him to the light,
He hath a good thick beard, and a ſtern eye,
That would be better ſtill.

RAYNER *(laughing)*.

Ha! ha! ha! what ſay ye to it, Father?
(Laughing again more violently than at firſt.)

MARDONIO *(turning out the* Turnkey *in a paſſion, and returning ſternly to* Rayner*)*.

What means this wild and moſt unnatural mirth?
This lightneſs of the ſoul, ſtrange and unſuited
To thy unhappy ſtate? it ſhocks me much.
Approaching death brings naught to ſcare the good,
Yet has it wherewithal to awe the boldeſt:
And there are ſeaſons when the lighteſt ſoul
Is call'd on to look inward on itſelf
In awful ſerioufneſs.

RAYNER.

Thou doſt me wrong; indeed thou doſt me wrong.
I laugh'd, but, faith! I am not light of ſoul:
And he who moſt misfortune's ſcourge hath felt
Will tell thee laughter is the child of mis'ry.
Ere ſin brought wretchedneſs into the world,
The ſoberneſs of undiſturbed bliſs

Held even empire o'er the minds of men,
Like ſteady ſunſhine of a cloudleſs ſky.
But when ſhe came, then came the roaring ſtorm,
Lowering and dark; wild, changeful, and perturb'd;
Whilſt thro' the rent clouds oft times ſhot the gleam
More bright and powerful for the gloom around it.
E'en midſt the ſavage ſtrife of warring paſſions,
Diſtorted and fantaſtic, laughter came,
Haſty and keen, like wild-fire in the night;
And wretches learnt to catch the fitful thought
That ſwells with antic and uneaſy mirth
The hollow care-lined cheek. I pray thee pardon!
I am not light of ſoul.
Death is to me an awful thing; nay, Father,
I fear to die. And were it in my power,
By ſuffering of the keeneſt racking pains,
To keep upon me ſtill theſe weeds of nature,
I could ſuch things endure, that thou would'ſt marvel,
And croſs thyſelf to ſee ſuch coward-bravery.
For oh! it goes againſt the mind of man
To be turn'd out from its warm wonted home,
Ere yet one rent admits the winter's chill.

MARDONIO.

Come to my breaſt, my ſon! thou haſt ſubdued me. *(Embracing him.)*
And now we will lift up our thoughts to him
Who hath in mercy ſaved thy hands from blood.

RAYNER.

Yes, in great mercy, for the which I'd bow
In truer thankfulneſs, my good Mardonio,
Ev'n with theſe fears of nature on my mind,
Than for the bleſſing of my ſpared life,
Were it now proffer'd me.

(They retire into the obſcurity of the dungeon, at the bottom of the ſtage, and the Scene *cloſes on them.)*

SCENE II. *A ſmall apartment in a ſolitary cottage in the country: Enter* Count Zaterloo, *ſupported by an attendant and followed by the* Counteſs *in the diſguiſe of a* Pilgrim ; *both of them wearing maſks. She places a pillow for his head on a couch or ſick chair, and he is placed upon it, apparently with pain.*

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(to* Attendant).

There, ſet him gently down; this will ſupport him,
(To Count Zaterloo.) How art thou now? I fear thou'rt very faint
After ſo long a journey.
(To Attendant.) We have no farther need of thine aſſiſtance:
Thou wilt retire, but be upon the watch.

(Exit Attendant.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(unmaſking).*

Now, charming Mira, lay diſguiſe aſide;

Speak thine own natural voice, and be thyſelf:
There is no eye to look upon us now;
No more excuſe for this myſteriouſneſs.
Let me now look upon thy face and bleſs it!
Thou haſt done well by me: thou'rt wond'rous gentle.
I knew thee fair and charming, but I knew not
Thou wert of ſuch a ſoft and kindly nature.
(The Counteſs *unmaſks and looks at him ſorrowfully.)*
Ha, mother! is it you?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Who ſhould it be? where ſhould'ſt thou look for kindneſs?
When we are ſick where can we turn for ſuccour;
When we are wretched where can we complain;
And when the world looks cold and ſurly on us,
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye
With ſuch ſure confidence as to a mother?
The world may ſcowl, acquaintance may forſake,
Friends may neglect, and lovers know a change,
But when a mother doth forſake her child,
Men lift their hands and cry, "a prodigy!"

COUNT ZATERLOO *(taking hold of both her hands and kiſſing them).*

O mother! I have been a thankleſs child!
I've given thee hoary hairs before thy time;
And added weight to thy declining years,
Who ſhould have been their ſtay.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Be calm, my ſon, for I do not upbraid thee.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Wretch that I am! I was an only ſon,
And therefore bound by no divided tie
To be to thee thy hold and thy ſupport.
I was a widow's ſon, and therefore bound
By every generous and manly tie
To be in filial duty moſt devoted.
O I have vilely done! I feel it now;
But if I live to be a man again,
I'll prove a better ſon to thee, dear mother.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

I know thou wilt, my deareſt Zaterloo;
And do not thus upbraid thyſelf too ſharply;
I've been a fooliſh mother to thy youth,
But thou wilt pardon me.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Of this no more—How came you by my letter?
If you did intercept it on its way,
Mira is faithful ſtill.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

It was from Mira's hand that I received it.
She toſs'd it at me with a jeering ſmile
When I with anxious tears inquired for thee.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(riſing half from his ſeat in great paſſion.)*

O faithleſs, faithleſs woman! ſhe it was,
Who made of me the curſed thing I am!
I've been a fool indeed and well requited.
Baſe, avaricious and ungrateful——oh!
(Putting his hand on his ſide as if ſeized with ſudden pain.)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Such agitation ſuits not with thy ſtate:
What ails thee now?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

The pain, the pain! it has return'd again
With encreaſed violence.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

God ſend thee eaſe! why doſt thou look ſo wildly,
And graſp my hand ſo hard? What is't diſturbs thee?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

My time on earth is ſhort.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Nay, ſay not ſo: thou may'ſt recover ſtill.
O why this ſeeming agony of mind?
'Tis not the pain that racks thee.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

There's blood upon my head: I am accurſed.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Good heaven forfend! thou wand'reſt in thy ſpeech.
Thy life I know is forfeit to the law
By ſome unlawful act, but oh no blood!

COUNT ZATERLOO.

O for a ſhort reſpite! but 'twill not be:
I feel my time is near.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Thou wand'reſt much: there's ſomething on thy mind,
Dark'ning thy fancy.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

'Twas I that did it—I that murder'd him:
He who muſt ſuffer for it did it not.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

What words are theſe? my blood runs cold to hear them.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(alarm'd.)*

Be ſtill, be ſtill! there's ſome one at the door:
All round me is expoſed and inſecure.

(Counteſs Zaterloo *goes to the door and receives ſomething from a* Servant, *ſhutting the door immediately.)*

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

It is a ſervant come to fetch me ſomething.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Has he not heard it? he has heard it all!
(In violent alarm and agitation.)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Be ſtill, be ſtill! it is impoſſible.
Thou'ſt wak'd the pain again; I ſee thee tremble.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(writhing as if in great pain).*

Ay, this will maſter me: 'twill have me now:
What can be done? O for a ſhort reprieve!

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Alas, my child! what would'ſt thou have me do?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I would have time turn'd backward in his courſe,
And what is paſt ne'er to have been: myſelf
A thing that no exiſtence ever had.
Canſt thou do this for me?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Alas! I cannot.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then curſed be thy early mother's cares!

Would thou had'ſt lifted up my infant form
And daſh'd it on the ſtones! I had not liv'd—
I had not lived to curſe thee for thy pains.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

And doſt thou curſe me then?

COUNT ZATERLOO *(ſoften'd).*

O no! I do not!
I did not curſe thee, mother: was it ſo?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

No, no, thou didſt not: yet I have deſerv'd—
I was a mother ſelfiſh in my fondneſs;
And with indulgence, ſenſeleſs and extreme,
Blaſted the goodly promiſe of thy youth.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(riſing half up alarm'd from his couch).*

Hark! there's a noiſe again! haſt thou more ſervants
Coming with errands to thee?—We're diſcover'd!

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Be not ſo ſoon alarm'd: it is impoſſible.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Is there an inner chamber? lead me there;
(Pointing to a door.)
I cannot reſt in this. *(Stopping ſhort eagerly as ſhe is leading him out with great difficulty.)*
——— Thine abſence haply
From thine own houſe, ſuſpicion may create:

Return to it again, and thro' the day
Live there as thou art wont; by fall of eve
Thou'lt come to me again.—I'm very weak;
I muſt lean hard upon thee.

(Exit, looking ſuſpiciouſly behind him as if he heard a noiſe, and ſupported with great difficulty by his mother.)

SCENE III. *The* Counteſs Zaterloo's *houſe: enter* COUNTESS *and a* Female ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Ah! wherefore, madam, are you thus diſturb'd
Pacing from room to room with reſtleſs change,
And turning ſtill a keen and anxious ear
To every noiſe? What can I do for you?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Ceaſe, ceaſe! thou canſt do nothing, my good girl:
I have a cauſe, but do not ſeek to know it.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

There is a ſtranger——

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(ſtarting with alarm).*

Ha! what doſt thou ſay?
A ſtranger! what appearance does he wear?
Is there but one? Looks he ſuſpiciouſly?

SERVANT.

Be not alarmed, madam; 'tis a woman.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(feigning compoſure)*.

Thou art a fool to think I am alarm'd:
Or man or woman, whoſoe'er it be,
I am unwell, and muſt not be diſturb'd.

SERVANT.

It is a lady of diſtinguiſh'd mein,
Tho' much in grief, and ſhe ſo earneſtly
Pleads for admittance that I am compell'd—
Pardon me, madam; but to look upon her
Would move your heart to pity.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Let her enter. *(Exit* Servant.)
Who may this be? why do I tremble thus?
In grief!—the wretched ſurely will not come
In guileful ſeeming to betray the wretched.
(To Attendant.) Know'ſt thou who this may be?

ATTENDANT.

Indeed I do not.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Retire then to a diſtance: here ſhe comes:
But do not leave the chamber.

(Attendant *retires to the bottom of the ſtage, and enter* Elizabeth *with her hair and dreſs diſordered, like one diſtracted with grief.)*

ELIZABETH.

Madam, I come a ſtranger to your preſence,

By misery emboldened'd, and urg'd on
By desperation. In your pity only
Lives all the hope of my most wretched state:
O kill it not! push me not to the brink
Of misery so deep and terrible!
Have pity! O have pity on my woe!
Thou art a woman, and a woman's heart
Will not be shut against a wretched woman.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

What would'st thou ask? thou dost with too much grief
Conceal the point and object of thy suit.

ELIZABETH.

There is in prison bound, condemn'd to die,
And for a crime by others hands committed,
A noble youth, and my betrothed love:
Your son—O shrink not back, nor look so sternly!
Your son, as secret rumour hath inform'd me,
Mortally wounded and with little hope
Of life, can ample testimony give,
Being himself of those who did the deed,
That Rayner did it not:—O let him then,
In whate'er secret place he lies conceal'd,
In pity let him true confession make;
And we will bless him—Heav'n will pardon him!

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Despair hath made thee mad! art thou aware
What thou dost ask of me? Go to our governors;

They may have pity on thee; but from me
It were an act againſt the ſenſe of nature.

ELIZABETH.

Nay, ſay not ſo! I have for mercy ſued
At the proud feet of power, and been rejected:
What injury can reach a dying man?
Can his few hours of breathing poiſe the ſcales
'Gainſt the whole term of a man's reckon'd life
In youth's beſt ſtrength?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Go, thou haſt been deceiv'd with a falſe tale:
And, were it true, hope ends not but with life;
Heaven only knows who is a dying man.

ELIZABETH.

For bleſſed charity cloſe not your pity
Againſt all other feelings but your own!
(Claſping the Counteſs' *knees and kiſſing her hand.)*
Sweet lady! gentle lady! deareſt lady!
O be not ruthleſs to a ſoul bow'd down
In extreme wretchedneſs!

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Ceaſe, ceaſe! unlock thy hold: embrace me not!
Has he for whom thou plead'ſt from out o' thyſelf
Receiv'd his being? preſs'd with infant lips
Thy yearning boſom? ſmiled upon thy knees,

And bleſs'd thine ear with his firſt voice of words?
Away, away! deſpair has made thee mad,
That thus thou hang'ſt upon me.

ELIZABETH.

O he for whom I plead is to my ſoul
Its ſoul: is to my fancy its bound world,
In which it lives and moves; all elſe beyond
Darkneſs, annihilation. O have pity!
For well thou ſay'ſt, deſpair has made me mad.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Let go, let go! thou with a tigreſs ſtriv'ſt,
Defending her bay'd whelp: I have no pity.
Heav'n will have pity on thee! let me go;
Unlock thy deſp'rate hold.

(Breaks from her and runs out, and Elizabeth, *quite overcome, ſinks upon the ground, the* Attendant *ruſhing forward from the bottom of the ſtage to ſupport her.)*

Enter FATHER MARDONIO.

MARDONIO *(raiſing her).*

My daughter, heav'n will ſend in its good time
The aid that is appointed for thy ſtate.
Contend no more, but to its righteous will
Submit thyſelf. Let me conduct thee hence.

(Exeunt Mardonio *and* Attendant *ſupporting her. Re-enter the* Counteſs, *looking fearfully round her as ſhe enters.)*

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

She is gone now: thank God that ſhe is gone!

There is a horrid conflict in my mind.
What ſhall I do? I ſtrongly am beſet.
I will go quickly to ſome holy man,
And ghoſtly counſel aſk.

(Exit, croſſing the ſtage with a quick irreſolute ſtep, ſometimes ſtopping to conſider, and then hurrying on again.)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

A ſpacious outer Room in the Priſon.

Enter an UNDER-JAILOR *and a* CLOWN.

CLOWN.

I PRAY thee now, my good friend, here is a piece of money for thee—very good money too; thou may'ſt look o' both ſides of it an' thou wilt: it has been wrapped up in the foot of my old holiday ſtockings ſince laſt Michaelmas twelvemonth, and neither ſun nor wind has blown upon it. Take it, man, thou art heartily welcome to it if thou canſt put me into a good place near the ſcaffold; or a place were I may ſee him upon the ſcaffold; for I am five and thirty years old next Shrove-Tueſday when the time comes round, and I have never yet ſeen in all my born days ſo much as a thief ſet i' the ſtocks.

JAILOR.

Poor man! thou haſt lived in moſt deplorable ignorance indeed. But ſtand aſide a little, here is the famous executioner of Olmutz a-coming, who has been ſent for expreſsly to do the job; for our own is but a titulary hangman; he has all the honours of the office, but little experience in the duties of it.

CLOWN.

O dickens, I'll creep into a corner then, and have a good look of him. A man that has cut off men's heads, ſave us all! he muſt have a ſtrange bloody look about him for certain.

Enter two EXECUTIONERS, *ſpeaking as they enter.*

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

What! no execution in this town for theſe ten years paſt? Lord pity you all for a ſet of poor devils indeed! Why I have known a ſmaller town than this keep ye up a firſt executioner for the capital buſineſs, with a ſecond man under him for your petty cart-tail and pillory work; ay, and keep them handſomely employed too. No execution in ſuch a town as this for theſe ten years paſt! one might as well live amongſt the ſavages.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

It is a pitiful thing to be ſure, but don't deſpiſe us altogether, Mr. Maſter: we ſhall improve by and by, pleaſe God; and here is a fair beginning for it too, if the Lord proſper us.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Ay, thou wilt, perhaps, have the honour of hanging a thief or two before thou art the age of Methuſelah; but I warrant ye, the beheading of this young nobleman here by the famous executioner of Olmutz will be remembered amongſt you

for generations to come. It will be the grand date from which every thing will be reckoned; ay, your very grand children will boaſt that their fathers were preſent at the fight.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

I make no doubt on't, my maſter, but you are a very capital man in your way: Lord forbid that I ſhould envy the greatneſs of any one; but I would have you to know that there have been others in the world as good as yourſelf ere now: my own father cut off Baron Koſlam's head upon this very ſcaffold that we now hear them hammering at.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Some wandering hocus-pocus Baron, I ſuppoſe, that ſold noſtrums for the tooth-ach. I always put ſuch fellows into the hands of my underling to operate upon; I never count the dealing with them as your prime work, tho' for certain we muſt call it your head-work; ha! ha! ha! *(holding out his axe in a vain-glorious manner.)* Seeſt thou this axe of mine? The beſt blood of the country has been upon its edge: to have had one's father or brother under its ſtroke, let me tell thee, is equal to a patent of nobility.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

Well, be it ſo: I envy no man, God be praiſed! tho' thou art ſet over my head upon this occaſion. I have whipp'd, branded, and pilloried in great

meekneſs and humility for theſe ſeven years paſt; but the humble ſhall be exalted at laſt, and I ſhall have better work to do, by and by, God willing. Let us have no more contention about it.—Who's there? *(obſerving* Jailor *and* Clown.) Ay, Jailor, do thou go and kick up the black prince, he is ſnoring in ſome corner near us, and ſend him for ſome brandy.

(Jailor *coming forward, with the* Clown *creeping after him, half afraid.)*

JAILOR.

The black prince is no where to be found; he has not been ſeen ſince the cells were locked.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

Go fetch us ſome liquor thyſelf then.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

But who is this ſneaking behind thee, and afraid to ſhow his face?

JAILOR.

Only a poor countryman, a friend of mine, who wanted to look at you as you paſt.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Yes, yes, every body has a curioſity to look at extraordinary perſons. *(to* Clown.) Come forward man, and don't be afraid. Did'ſt thou ever be-

fore ſee any thing better than a poor pariſh prieſt, or a ſcrubby lord of the village? didſt thou, eh?

CLOWN *(abaſhed)*.

I don't know, pleaſe you: my brother did once ſtand within a team's length of the Prince of Carara, when he paſſed through our village on his way to Franconia.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

So then thou art not the firſt of thy family that has ſeen a great man. But don't be afraid, my good fellow, I a'nt proud nor haughty as many of them be: thou ſhalt even ſhake hands with me an' thou wilt. *(Holding out his hand to* Clown, *who ſhrinks from him, and puts his hands behind his back.)*

CLOWN.

No, I thank you; I ben't much of a hand-ſhaker: I have got a little ſore on my thumb, may it pleaſe you: I thank you all the ſame as tho' I did.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Ay, thou art too mannerly to call it the thing that we wot of. Well, thou art a good ſort of fellow; don't be abaſh'd: thou ſee'ſt I am very condeſcending to thee. Come, then, thou ſhalt drink a cup of liquor with me. Follow us into the next ward, my good friend.

CLOWN *(ſhrinking from him again).*

O na, ſave your preſence! I'll go with the jailor here.

FIRST EXECUTIONER *(to* Second Executioner).

Ay, he is but a poor baſhful clown, and don't know how to behave himſelf in good company.

(Exeunt Executioners.

CLOWN.

Shake hands with him, Mary preſerve us! it ſets the very ends of my fingers a dingling. Drink out of the ſame mug with him too! *(ſputtering with his lips)* poh! poh! poh! the taſte of raw heads and carrion is on my lips at the thoughts of it. *(To* Jailor.) Come let us go out of this place; I be long enough here. *(ſtepping ſhort as he goes off.)* What noiſe and hammering is this we hear?

JAILOR.

It is the workmen putting up the ſcaffold.

CLOWN *(ſtarting).*

What, are we ſo near to it? mercy on us! let me get out of this place, for it puts me into a terrible quandary.

JAILOR.

If this be the mettle thou art made of, thou had'ſt better take thy money again, and I'll give thy place

for the ſight to ſomebody that has got a ſtouter heart than thou haſt.

CLOWN.

Na, na, I won't do that neither; I have a huge deſire to ſee how a man looks when he is going to have his head cut off, and I'll ſtay for the ſight tho' I ſhould ſwoon for it. Poor man! poor man! what frightful things there be in this world when one's mind ſets a thinking upon it!—Is he a tall man now, *(to* Jailor) or a ſhort man? a pale-faced man, or——ay, pale enough, I warrant. Mercy on us! I ſhall think of him many a night after this before I go to ſleep. Poor man! poor man! what terrible things there be in this world if a body does but think of them.

(Exeunt Clown *and* Jailor.

SCENE II. *A dungeon;* Rayner *diſcovered ſitting at a table by the light of a lamp, with a book in his hand; the clock from a neighbouring ſteeple ſtrikes three, and he, rouſed with the ſound, lays down the book.*

RAYNER.

This bell ſpeaks with a deep and ſullen voice:
The time comes on apace with ſilent ſpeed.
Is it indeed ſo late? *(Looking at his watch.)*
It is even ſo.
(Pauſing, and looking ſtill at the watch.)
How ſoon time flies away! yet, as I watch it,

Methinks, by the ſlow progreſs of this hand,
I ſhould have liv'd an age ſince yeſterday,
And have an age to live. Still on it creeps,
Each little moment at another's heels,
Till hours, days, years, and ages are made up
Of ſuch ſmall parts as theſe, and men look back,
Worn and bewilder'd, wond'ring how it is.
Thou trav'lleſt like a ſhip in the wide ocean,
Which hath no bounding ſhore to mark its progreſs,
O Time! ere long I ſhall have done with thee.
When next thou leadeſt on thy nightly ſhades,
Tho' many a weary heart thy ſteps may count,
Thy midnight 'larum ſhall not waken me.
Then ſhall I be a thing, at thought of which
The rouſed ſoul ſwells boundleſs and ſublime,
Or wheels in wildneſs of unfathom'd fears:
A thought; a conſciouſneſs; unbodied ſpirit.
Who but would ſhrink from this? It goes hard with thee,
Social connected man; it goes hard with thee
To be turned out into a ſtate unknown,
From all thy kind, an individual being.
But wherefore ſhrink? came we not thus to earth?
And he who ſent, prepar'd reception for us.
Ay, glorious are the things that are prepar'd,
As we believe!—yet, heaven pardon me!
I fain would ſculk beneath my wonted cov'ring,
Mean as it is.
Ah, Time! when next thou fill'ſt thy nightly term,
Where ſhall I be? Fye! fye upon thee ſtill!
Ev'n where weak infancy, and tim'rous age,

And maiden fearfulneſs have gone before thee;
And where, as well as him of firmeſt ſoul,
The meanly-minded and the coward are.
Then truſt thy nature, at th' approaching puſh,
The mind doth ſhape itſelf to its own wants,
And can bear all things. *(Riſing from his ſeat, and walking ſeveral times backward and forward.)*
I know not how it is, I'm wond'rous heavy;
Fain would I reſt a while. This weary frame
Has but a little more to do for me,
And yet it aſks for reſt. I'll lay me down:
It may be poſſible that I ſhall ſleep,
After theſe weary toſſings of the mind;
I feel as tho' I ſhould. *(Goes to ſleep, covering himſelf with a cloak.)*

Enter OHIO, *creeping out from a hiding-place at the bottom of the ſtage, and going ſoftly up to* Rayner, *looks for ſome time upon him with a malicious grin.*

OHIO.

Thou haſt lov'd negroes' blood, I warrant thee.
Doſt ſleep? ay, they will waken thee ere long,
And cut thy head off. They'll put thee to reſt;
They'll cloſe thine eyes for thee without thy leave;
They'll bloat thy white ſkin for thee, lily-face.
Come, leſs harm will I do thee than thy fellows:
My ſides are cold: a dead man needs no cloak.
(Beginning gently to pull off Rayner's *cloak, who ſtarts from his ſleep, and looks at him in amazement.)*

RAYNER.

Ha! what hole of the earth hath caſt thee up?
What thing art thou? and what would'ſt thou
with me?

OHIO.

My ſides are cold; a dead man needs no cloak.

RAYNER.

'Tis true indeed, but do not ſtrip the living.
Where doſt thou run to now? where wert thou hid?

OHIO *(after running to his hiding-place, and fetching out a ſtick, which he preſents to* Rayner).

Beat me thyſelf, but do not tell of me.

RAYNER.

I would not harm thee for a greater fault.
I'm ſorry thou art cold; here is my cloak:
Thou haſt ſaid well; a dead man needs it not.
I know thee now; thou art the wretched negro
Who ſerves the priſoners; I have obſerv'd thee:
I'm ſorry for thee; thou art bare enough,
And winter is at hand.

OHIO.

Ha! art thou ſorry that the negro's cold?
Where wert thou born who art ſo pitiful?
I will not take thy cloak, but I will love thee.
They ſhall not cut thy head off.

RAYNER.

Go thy ways;
Go ſculk within thy hiding place again,
And, when the cell is open'd, ſave thyſelf.

OHIO.

They ſhan't cut off thy head.

RAYNER.

Now, pray thee go.

OHIO.

I'll kiſs thy feet; I'll ſpend my blood for thee.

RAYNER.

I do beſeech thee go! there's ſome one coming:
I hear them at the door. *(Puſhes him haſtily off.)*

Enter HARDIBRAND, *advancing ſlowly to* Rayner, *his eyes caſt upon the ground.*

RAYNER.

Good morrow, general: where's thy friendly hand?
Why doſt thou turn thine eyes aſide, and fear
To look me in the face? Is there upon it
Aught that betrays the workings of the mind
Too ſtrongly mark'd? I will confeſs to thee
I've ſtruggl'd hard, I've felt the fears of nature;
But yet I have the ſpirit of a man
That will uphold me: therefore, my brave friend,
Do me the grace to look upon me boldly;
I'll not diſgrace thee.

HARDIBRAND.

No, my valiant boy!
I know thou'lt not diſgrace me, nor will I

Put ſhame on thee by wearing on this morn
A weeping face: I will be valiant too.
We will not, Rayner, tho' thou'rt thus—Oh! oh!
(Burſting into tears.)

RAYNER.

My gen'rous friend, my ſecond father, why
Wilt thou oppreſs me thus?

HARDIBRAND.

Bear with me, bear with me; I meant to brave it,
And I will brave it. But to thee, my ſon,
In thy diſtreſs, encompaſs'd as thou art,
My heart ſo ſtrongly has enlink'd itſelf,
That to part from thee, boy, is ——
(Falling on his neck, and burſting again into tears.)

Enter MARDONIO.

MARDONIO *(after looking at them for ſome time, and in a ſolemn impoſing tone of voice).*

The ſtrength of man ſinks in the hour of trial;
But there doth live a pow'r that to the battle
Girdeth the weak: Heaven's vivifying grace,
And ſtrength, and holy confidence be thine,
Who art in mercy ſtricken! *(Holding up his right hand to heaven, whilſt* Rayner, *approaching with reverence, bows himſelf beneath it very low.)*

RAYNER.

Thanks to thee, father! theſe are words of power,
And I do feel their ſtrength. Beneath that hand

Which hath in mercy ſtricken me, I bow;
Yea bow, the nobler and the bolder grown
For ſuch humility.—*(Familiarly)* How goes the time?
Does day begin to dawn?

MARDONIO.

Grey light peeps faintly o'er the eaſtern towers.

RAYNER.

The time is then advanc'd; we'll huſband it.
Come cloſe to me, my friends. *(Taking* Hardibrand *and* Mardonio *each by the hand, and preſſing them cloſe to his breaſt.)*
Of worldly cares, upon my mind there reſts
But only thoſe which I have mention'd to you.
Yet, in this ſolemn hour, let me remind you:—
My poor Elizabeth ———

HARDIBRAND *(eagerly).*

Thou'ſt ſaid enough:
She is my child and heireſs of my lands
To the laſt rood.—Ah! what avails it now!

RAYNER.

How ſhall a dying man find thanks for this,
Whoſe day is cloſed? I will attempt no thanks.
The other wiſh that cloſely preſſes on me:—
Mardonio, upon thee muſt hang this boon:—
That miſerable man of whom I've told you;
Now living in the hell of his remorſe,
Cut off from human intercourſe; whoſe viſion

Of midnight horrors ſav'd this hand from blood:
I fain ———

HARDIBRAND *(again eagerly interrupting him).*

Fear not! fear not! he ſhall be ſav'd;
And ſhall with human beings yet conſort
In bleſſed charity, if ghoſtly care
From holieſt men procur'd, or off'rings made
To ev'ry ſacred ſhrine on chriſtian ground
Can give him peace.

RAYNER *(ſmiling and preſſing* Hardibrand *to his boſom).*

With all the prompt and gen'rous profuſion
Of eager youth doſt thou, mine aged friend,
Take every thing upon thee. Be it ſo.
And good Mardonio with his ſober counſel
Will aid thy bounty. Here I join your hands:
My worldly cares are clos'd.

Enter ELIZABETH, *followed by* Richard *and* Bertram, *who remain on the back ground whilſt ſhe comes ſlowly forward;* Rayner *turning round on hearing them enter.*

Ah! who is this?
Alas! alas! it is Elizabeth.
(Holding out his hand to her.)
Advance, my love; thou'rt ever welcome here.
How does it fare with thee?

ELIZABETH.

It is all miſt and darkneſs with me now;
I know not how it fares with me.

RAYNER.

Alas!
Thou gentle ſoul! a dark cloud o'er thee hangs,
But thro' the gloom the ſun again will break,
And, in the ſoberneſs of calm remembrance,
Thou wilt look back upon misfortunes paſt
Like tempeſts that are laid. Thou doſt not heed me:
Thou doſt not ſpeak to me. Alas! Alas!
What ſhall I ſay to thee?
I've lov'd thee well, and would have lov'd thee long,
Had it ſo been—But thou ſhalt be belov'd!
Heaven will take charge of thee when I'm at reſt:
The kindly and the good ſhall be thy kindred,
(Putting her hand in Hardibrand's.)
And ev'ry ſorrowful and gentle heart
Shall knit itſelf to thee, and call thee ſiſter.
(Elizabeth *makes a motion with her hand as if ſhe would ſpeak, and he pauſes, but ſhe is ſilent.)*
What meant, my love, that motion of thy hand?

MARDONIO.

She fain would ſpeak to thee, but has no voice.

RAYNER.

I know it well, Elizabeth; no voice
Need'ſt thou to tell me how thou'ſt dearly lov'd me,
And dearly do I prize it; 'tis my pride;

E'en humbl'd as I am, it is my pride.
Heaven's deareſt bleſſings reſt upon thy head!—
And now, ſince we muſt part, do in thy love,
Do for me this laſt grace; bid me farewel,
And let my earthly ſorrows now be clos'd.
Heaven's bleſſing reſt upon thee!

(He kiſſes her, and ſhe turns to go away, Rayner *looking after her as ſhe goes, but preſently returns again.)*

RAYNER.

Thou art return'd, my ſoul, what would'ſt thou have?

ELIZABETH *(in a broken voice).*

A thought—a wiſh did preſs upon my heart,
But it is gone.

RAYNER.

I thank thee for thy wiſh;
It is a good one, tho' thou canſt not ſpeak it,
And it will do me good. But leave me! leave me!
Thou wilt unfit me for a taſk of ſtrength.

(Elizabeth *again attempts to go away, but ſtill returns.)*

Ah, wherefore ſtill! wilt thou be cruel to me?

ELIZABETH.

O, no! O, no! I know not what I do:
It is all miſt and darkneſs with me now:
I look upon thee, but I ſee thee not.

Let me once more but feel thy hand in mine
And ſend me where ye will: my being then
Is at an end. *(They embrace again, and ſhe ſtill continues to hang upon him.)*

RAYNER *(to* Bertram *and* Richard).
O, lead her hence, and have ſome mercy on me!
My father died i' the field a valiant death,
And ſhall his ſon upon the ſcaffold die
O'ercome and weak, reft of that decent firmneſs
Which ev'n the baſe and vulgar there aſſume?
O lead her hence! in mercy lead her hence!
(Bertram *and* Richard *tear her from him, and lead her away, whilſt he turns his back, and hides his face with his hands.)*

ELIZABETH *(ſtopping ſhort, and toſſing up her arms diſtractedly as they are leading her out).*
Reprieve! reprieve! I hear a voice i' the air!
I hear it yet again!

RAYNER *(uncovering his face, and looking about eagerly, whilſt* Hardibrand *ruſhes forward impetuouſly from the bottom of the ſtage, where he has been pacing backward and forward with haſty ſtrides).*
Is't any thing?

MARDONIO.
Alas no! all is ſilent: 'tis the fancy
Of fond diſtraction liſt'ning to itſelf.

HARDIBRAND.

Nay, it was ſomething: Bertram, thou did'ſt hear it?

BERTRAM.

No, I heard nothing.

HARDIBRAND.

What, nor thou, good Richard?

RICHARD.

No, nothing.

ELIZABETH *(holding up her arm diſtractedly as* Richard *and* Bertram *lead her off).*

And is it nothing! no redemption near!

(Exeunt Elizabeth, Richard, *and* Bertram, *whilſt* Rayner, *uttering a deep groan, hides his face, and* Hardibrand *returns with haſty ſtrides to the bottom of the ſtage.*

RAYNER *(uncovering his face).*

Is ſhe gone now?

MARDONIO.

She is.

RAYNER.

Thank God for it! Now to our taſk:

(Stepping forward with aſſumed firmneſs.)

What of it now remains we ſhall o'er-maſter.
Pray thee how goes the time? But pardon me!
I have too oft enquir'd how goes the time:
It is my weakneſs.

MARDONIO.

The morning now advances.

RAYNER.

So I reckon'd.
We too ſhall put ourſelves in forwardneſs:
And ſo, good father, to your ghoſtly guidance
I do commend myſelf.

Enter JAILOR.

JAILOR.

The officers of juſtice are arrived,
And wait the preſence of the priſoner.

RAYNER.

They come upon us ſooner than we wiſt;
But 'tis ſo much the better.
(To Mardonio *aſide.)*
Shall we have time allow'd us for retirement,
Before they lead me forth?

MARDONIO.

'Tis ever ſo allow'd.

RAYNER.

Come then, I feel me ſtronger than I was:
'Twill ſoon be paſt; the work goes on apace.
(Taking hold of Hardibrand *and* Mardonio *as he goes out.)*
Your arm, I pray:—I know not how it is;

My head feels dizzy, but my limbs are firm.
Good Hardibrand, think'ſt thou I ſhall diſgrace
thee?

HARDIBRAND.

No, by the maſs! I'll give them this old carcaſe
To hack for crow's meat if thou ſhrink'ſt one hair's
breadth
From the comportment of a gallant ſoldier,
And of a brave man's ſon.

RAYNER *(ſmiling with a gratified look.)*

I thank thee.
Methinks I tread now, as I onward move,
With more elaſtic and dilating ſtep,
As if a ſpirit of pride within me ſtirr'd,
Buoying me up on the ſwoln billows ridge.

(Exeunt.

SCENE III. *An outer garden-room or portico in the houſe where* Zaterloo *is concealed; enter* Counteſs *and a* Confeſſor, *with two Attendants bearing* Zaterloo *on a ſmall couch, which they ſet down on the middle of the ſtage; the Attendants retire.*

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

The air revives him: look, I pray thee, father,
How the freſh air revives him: ſay not then
All hope is baniſh'd quite.—Thou ſhak'ſt thy head:
But whilſt I ſee upon his moving breaſt
One heave of breath, betok'ning life within,

I'll graſp at hope, and will not let it go.
(Bending over the couch.)
My ſon! my ſon! hear'ſt thou my voice, my ſon?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes, mother: I have had a fearful ſtruggle.
'Tis a ſtrong enemy that grapples with me,
And I muſt yield to him.—O pious father!
Pray thou for mercy on me.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Yes, my ſon,
This holy man ſhall pray for thee; the ſhrines
Of holieſt ſaints be gifted for thee; maſſes
And ſacred hymns be chanted for thy peace:—
And thou thyſelf, even 'midſt thine agony,
Haſt ſpoken precious words of heav'nly grace;
Therefore be comforted.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(ſhaking his head)*.

There is no comfort here: dark, veil'd, and terrible,
That which abides me; and how ſhort a ſpace——

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

O thou may'ſt yet recover!

CONFESSOR.

Lady, forbear! this is no time to ſoothe
With flatt'ring hopes: his term is near its cloſe;
Therefore, I do again entreat it of you,
Send off the meſſenger with his confeſſion,

Leſt it ſhould be too late to ſave the innocent,
And he be ſent unto his long account
With a moſt heavy charge upon his head.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Thou mak'ſt me tremble.—Ho! There, you without!
Send here the meſſenger. *(Calling off the ſtage.)*
——His ſteed is ready:
He ſhall forthwith depart.

Enter MESSENGER.

CONFESSOR *(to* Meſſenger).

Take thou this packet, and with full-bent ſpeed
Go to the city to the governor,
And ſee that into his own hand thou give it,
With charges that he read it inſtantly.
It is of precious moment to *his* life
Who on the ſcaffold ſhould this morning ſuffer.
Quick mount thy horſe: few minutes goaded ſpeed
Will take thee to the gates.

MESSENGER.

Few minutes goaded ſpeed, five leagues to maſter!

CONFESSOR.

Five leagues! thou'rt mad.

MESSENGER.

No, marry! know ye not
The flooded river hath laſt night broke down
The nearer bridge?

CONFESSOR.

What, art thou ſure of this?

MESSENGER.

I am now come from gazing on the ſight.
From bank to bank the red ſwoln river roars;
And on the deep and ſlowly-rolling maſs
Of its ſtrong centre-tide, grumly and dark,
The wrecks of cottages, whole ricks of grain,
Trunks of huge trees torn by the roots,—ay, ſave us!
And floating carcaſes of periſh'd things,
Bloated and black, are borne along; whilſt currents
Croſs-ſet and furious, meeting adverſe ſtreams
On rude uneven ſurface, far beyond
The water's natural bed, do loudly war
And terrible conteſt hold; and ſwoltring eddies
With dizzy whirling fury, toſs aloft
Their ſurgy waves i' the air, and ſcatter round
Their ceaſeleſs bick'ring gleams of jagged foam,
All fiercely whit'ning in the morning light.
Crowds now are ſtanding upon either ſhore
In awful ſilence; not a ſound is heard
But the flood's awful voice, and from the city
A diſmal bell heard thro' the air by ſtarts,
Already tolling for the execution.

CONFESSOR.

What's to be done? fate ſeems to war againſt us.
No, no! we'll not deſpair! Mount thy fleet horſe,

Life and death's in thy ſpeed:—
Let naught one moment ſtop thee on thy way:
All things are poſſible to vig'rous zeal:
Life and death's in thy ſpeed: depart! depart!
And heaven be .th thine efforts.
(Exit Meſſenger, *after receiving the packet.)*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Is he gone? is it done?

CONFESSOR.

Yes he is gone: God grant he be in time,
For unto human reck'ning 'tis impoſſible!
(To Counteſs *with an upbraiding look.)*
Half an hour ſooner——

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Oh, torment me not!
Who could foreſee this hind'rance?—O, good father!
Look to thy penitent. Upon his count'nance
There's ſomething new and terrible. Speak to him:
Go cloſe to him, good father.—O my ſon!

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I feel within me now—this is the feeling:
I am upon the brink, the dreadful brink:
It is a fearful gulf I have to ſhoot.
O yet ſupport me! in this racking pain
I ſtill may hold a ſpace the graſp of life,

And keep back from the dark and horrid—Oh!
(uttering a deep groan) It is upon me!

(Struggles and expires with a faint groan. Counteſs, *wringing her hands in agony of grief, is hurried off the ſtage by the* Confeſſor *and Attendants, who ruſh in and take hold of her.)*

SCENE IV. *An open ſquare before the great gate of the priſon: a Crowd of ſpectators, with guards, &c. are diſcovered, waiting for the coming forth of* Rayner *to his execution, and a ſolemn bell is heard at intervals. The gate opens, and enter* Rayner *walking between* Mardonio *and* Hardibrand, *and followed by* Richard *and* Bertram, *preceded and followed by guards, officers, &c. The proceſſion moves ſlowly over the ſtage, and exeunt, followed by the greater part of the Crowd, though a good many of them ſtill remain upon the ſtage. Then re-enter* Hardibrand *and* Richard, *followed by one or two of the Crowd:* Hardibrand *walking up and down in a perturbed manner, and* Richard *leaning his back againſt the ſide-ſcene, where he continues motionleſs with his eyes fixed on the ground. The murmur of the multitude is heard for ſome time without, and then ceaſes, followed by a dead ſilence.*

FIRST CROWD.

The ſound of the multitude is ſtill now.

SECOND CROWD *(looking out.)*

I fancy, by the crowd who ſtand all gather'd

round yonder in dead silence, he is now preparing for the block.

THIRD CROWD.

It must be so: mercy on us, what a mantle of human faces there be spread round on every side, and not one sound of voice amongst them all!

(A long pause.)

HARDIBRAND *(starting and stopping suddenly, to* First Crowd).

Didst thou hear aught?

FIRST CROWD.

No, they are still silent.

HARDIBRAND.

Look out, I pray thee, and tell me what thou see'st.

(First Crowd *looks out.)*

What dost thou gaze at with so broad an eye?

FIRST CROWD.

The executioner is now mounted upon the platform, and the prisoner——O! I cannot look any more! *(A loud confused noise is heard without.)*

HARDIBRAND.

What's that?

SECOND CROWD.

It is like the cry of a great multitude when they look upon ſomething that is terrible.

FIRST CROWD.

Then the ſtroke is given, and it is all over now.

(Hardibrand *turns haſtily away, and ruſhes to the other end of the ſtage, whilſt* Richard *gives a heavy groan, and ſtill remains motionleſs. A ſhout is heard without.)*

HARDIBRAND *(returning furiouſly from the bottom of the ſtage).*

More of that horrible din!—
May they bring down the welkin on their heads!

SECOND CROWD *(to* Firſt Crowd).

What art thou looking at now?

FIRST CROWD.

Nay, there is nothing to look at now: the platform is down, and the crowd is returning home again.

Enter OHIO, *running acroſs the ſtage.*

OHIO.

I've done it! I've done it! I've done it! *(Exit.*

Enter a MESSENGER *in great haſte, followed by a Civil Officer.*

FIRST CROWD.

Where are you running to ſo faſt?

MESSENGER.

Is the execution over?

FIRST CROWD.

Yes, it is over.

MESSENGER.

Ah! then I am too late.

FIRST CROWD.

What mean ye by that?

MESSENGER.

I brought a pardon for him.

HARDIBRAND *(ruſhing upon the meſſenger and collaring him).*

A pardon! O confound your tardy ſpeed!
Had you upon ſome paltry wager ſtrove,
You had run faſter.—O, thou curſed fool!
O had'ſt thou ſped, I'd made a rich man of thee!

MESSENGER *diſentangling himſelf).*

My ſteed and I acroſs the high-ſwoln flood,
Thoſe on the ſhore ſhrieking to ſee our boldneſs,
Have fearleſs ſwam ſome miles ſhort of the paſs
Which we muſt elſe have gain'd, or, by my faith,
I had been later.

HARDIBRAND.

Thou lieſt, thou curſed fool! thou ſhould'ſt have
ſped
Swift as a bullet from the cannon's mouth.
(Collaring him again.)

Enter RAYNER, MARDONIO, BERTRAM, *and* CROWD.

MARDONIO *(to* Hardibrand, *pulling him back from the* Meſſenger).

Hold, general! what hath the poor man done?

HARDIBRAND.

What has he done! he's brought a pardon, fiend!
(The Crowd *give a great ſhout, crying out "pardon, pardon," and* Hardibrand, *turning round at the noiſe, and ſeeing* Rayner, *ſprings forward, and catches him in his arms.)*
God bleſs us all, and let us keep our wits!
Is this true ſeeing that my eyes are bleſt with?
O welcome, welcome! this is wonderful!
My boy! my noble boy! my gallant boy!
Thou art a man again, and I—I'm mad:
My head wheels round, but 'tis a bleſſed madneſs.
What ſay'ſt thou? art thou ſilent?
Haſt no voice?

RAYNER.

To be upon the verge of death is awful;
And awful from that verge to be recall'd.
God bleſs ye! O God bleſs ye! I am ſpent;
But let me draw my breath a little while,

And I will thank you—I will—Bear with me:
I cannot ſpeak. *(Recovering himſelf, and ſeeing the Crowd gather round him with joyful and ſympathizing looks.)*
Surely 'tis a kind world I have return'd to;
There's ſympathy and love in ev'ry heart.

MARDONIO *(to* Meſſenger).

Where is the pardon? let me have it friend,
That I may read it. (Meſſenger *gives him a paper, which he reads.)*
We charge thee upon our authority to ſet the
(Reading the reſt low to himſelf.)
What! call ye this a pardon which acquits
The priſoner as guiltleſs of the crime?
May God be praiſed! how has all this been?

MESSENGER.

Count Zaterloo, who on his death-bed lies,
In deep remorſe, a paper of confeſſion,
Atteſted by a prieſt and his own mother,
Caus'd to be drawn, which to the governor
I've brought, I wot, as quickly as I might,
Tho' *(pointing to* Hardibrand) this good gentleman—

HARDIBRAND *(embracing the* Meſſenger).

O no! O no! thou'rt a brave fellow now,
And as I've ſaid I'll make a rich man of thee.
But I'm bewilder'd ſtill: how hath it been
That he is ſav'd, ſeeing no pardon reach'd him?

MARDONIO.

Yes, thou may'ſt wonder! for ſome unknown friend
Had ſawn acroſs the main prop of the ſcaffold,
So that the headſman mounting firſt, the platform
Fell with a craſh; and he, all maim'd and bruis'd,
Unfit to do his office, was perforce ——

HARDIBRAND.

Ay, ay, 'tis plain, thou need'ſt not tell me more.—
But he the unknown friend ———

Enter OHIO, *running exultingly.*

OHIO.

'Twas I that did it!
Beat me and ſcourge me as ye liſt: I did it!
He offer'd me his cloak: he pitied me;
And I have paid him back.

HARDIBRAND.

Ha! well done and well ſaid, my brave black thing!
Art thou a prince? in faith I think thou art.
I'll take thee home, and make a man of thee.
No, no! *(pointing to* Rayner) here is my ſon, my heir, my child:
All that I have is his: he will reward thee.
Thou haſt a gen'rous mind, altho' debas'd
With vile oppreſſion and unmanly ſcorn.

RAYNER *(taking* Ohio *and* Hardibrand *both by the hand).*

What ſhall I ſay to you? my heart would ſpeak
What my voice cannot. O! and here comes one
Who mocks all power of words.

(Enter Elizabeth *running, and ruſhes into* Rayner*'s arms; the Crowd then eagerly gathers round them, and cloſes upon them.)*

MARDONIO *(ſtepping out from the crowd, and looking upon them.)*

Yes, gather round him, kindly ſouls tho' rude,
In the true artleſs ſympathy of nature;
For he is one o'er whom the ſtorm has roll'd
In awful power, but ſpar'd the thunderbolt.—
When urg'd by ſtrong temptation to the brink
Of guilt and ruin, ſtands the virtuous mind
With ſcarce a ſteep between; all pitying heaven,
Severe in mercy, chaſt'ning in its love,
Oftimes, in dark and awful viſitation,
Doth interpoſe, and leads the wand'rer back
To the ſtraight path, to be forever after
A firm, undaunted, onward bearing traveller,
Strong in humility, who ſwerves no more.

(Exeunt.

THE COUNTRY INN:

A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.
WORSHIPTON, *nephew to* Sir John.
AMARYLLIS, *a poet.*
DAVID, *servant, &c. of the inn.*
WILL, *postboy of the inn.*
JENKINS, *servant to* Worshipton.
Piper, Fidler, &c.

WOMEN:

LADY GOODBODY.
MISS MARTIN, } *nieces to* Lady Good-
MISS HANNAH CLODPATE, } body.
DOLLY, *maid of the inn.*
LANDLADY.
HOPKINS, *Lady* Goodbody's *maid.*
SALLY.

SCENE,—*A Country Inn, on one of the cross-roads leading from the North of* England *to* London.

THE COUNTRY INN:

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The kitchen of a Country Inn:* David *and* Jenkins *diſcovered ſitting by the fire-ſide.*

DAVID.

JOHN THOMSON, ſays I, why do you put yourſelf into a paſſion? an angry man, ſays I, John, may be compared to three things.

JENKINS.

Yaw! yaw! *(yawning very wide)* how thick that ſnow falls! *(looking to the window.)*

DAVID.

Well, well! let it fall as thick as it pleaſes!—To three things, John. In the firſt place, in reſpect that he is very hot and very reſtleſs and all that, he may be compared to the boiling of a pot——no, no! that was the third thing.

JENKINS.

Never mind, man, put it firſt this time for a variety.

DAVID.

No, no! let us have every thing as it ſhould be. In the firſt place then, ſays I, in reſpect that he is ſo ſharp, and ſo fuſſy, and ſo bouncing, he may be compared to your poor bottled ſmall-beer: and in the ſecond place, in reſpect that he is ſo loud and violent, and ſo haſty, he may be compared ——

JENKINS.

Yaw! yaw! yaw! *(yawning again very loud.)*

DAVID *(very impatiently)*.

Tut, man! can't you keep thoſe jaws of yours together, and hear what a body ſays?

JENKINS.

Yaw, yaw! Don't think becauſe I yawn, David, that I don't hear what you ſay.—But go on with your ſtory: in the ſecond place ——

DAVID.

In the ſecond place, ſays I, in reſpect that he is ſo violent and ſo loud, and ſo haſty, he may be compared to the letting off of a ———

JENKINS.

Of a train of gun-powder.

DAVID.

No, ſir; it was not to that, ſir.

JENKINS.

To the letting off of what, then?

DAVID.

No matter what: I had a compariſon of my own, but I'll keep it to myſelf.

JENKINS.

Very well, David; juſt as you pleaſe; for I can ſee now what an angry man is like, without your giving yourſelf any further trouble.

DAVID.

Ay, ay! jeer away ſir! you are juſt like your poor ſilly affected maſter up ſtairs, who ſimpers whenever I open my mouth to ſpeak, as if nobody had any ſenſe but himſelf.

JENKINS.

I don't think that my maſter ſets up for a wiſe man neither, maſter David; but he's young and well made, and ———

DAVID.

He well made, hang him! his uncle is a better made man by half.—Ay, there is a gentleman for-ye! a reaſonable, ſenſible, mannerly gentleman! he don't break in upon one with his ſneers and his jeers when a body is talking ſoberly and ſenſibly.

JENKINS.

To be ſure he has rather more manners about him than we can pretend to.

DAVID.

By my faith he has! and more ſenſe too. What do you think he ſaid to me the other day? David, ſays he, you only want a great wig upon your head and a gown upon your ſhoulders, to make as good a proſer as many that we liſten to in the pulpit or the bench. Now, wan't it very condeſcending in him to call ſuch a poor unlearned man as me a proſer, along with ſuch great folks as theſe? Not that I regarded ſo much the compliment to myſelf, for God knows, it becometh not a mortal man to be proud, but I love to hear people ſpeak rationally and civilly.

JENKINS.

Yes, there is nothing like it to be ſure: but my young maſter is a very good maſter to me, and he ſpends his money like a gentleman.

DAVID.

I don't care a ruſh how he ſpends his money: they ſeem to be the greateſt gentlemen now-a-days, who have leaſt money to ſpend. But if you had fallen ſick on the road, like that poor old devil in the roſe chamber, would your maſter have ſtopp'd ſo long at a poor Country Inn, to attend you himſelf

like a ſick nurſe? I trow not! he would have ſcamper'd off, and left you to follow when you could, or to die, if you had a mind to it.

JENKINS.

If I were old and ſickly, indeed, I had as lief have Sir John for my maſter.

DAVID.

I believe ſo: he is a better man than that ſkip-jack nephew of his, twenty times over, and a better looking man too. I wonder much how he has come to this time o' th' day (for he muſt be near forty I gueſs) without taking a wife.

JENKINS.

He thinks himſelf happier, I ſuppoſe, without one. And I am ſure no lady of any ſpirit or faſhion would think herſelf happy with him.

DAVID.

How ſo? what kind of man is he at home on his own eſtate?

JENKINS.

Why half ploughman; for he often enough holds his own plough of a morning, and can caſt ye up as ſtraight a furrow as any clod-footed lout in the country; half prieſt, for he reads family prayers to his ſervants every Sunday evening as devoutly as the vicar of the pariſh; half lawyer, for there is never a poor ſilly idiot that allows himſelf to be cheated

in the neighbourhood who does not run to him about it directly, and he will brow-beat and out-wit half a dozen of attorneys to have the goose righted again, if it were but of a crown's value.

DAVID.

Well, but there is nothing amiss in all this.

JENKINS.

Then his other odd ways. Dinner must be upon the table every day at the very moment he has fixed, and he will not give ten minutes law to the first lord of the land. Devilishly inconvenient that for young fellows like me and my master.

DAVID.

So much the better; I commend him for it.

JENKINS.

Then he pretends to be hospitable, and entertains the first people of the country, and yet he is not ashamed to boast that there has not been a drunk man in his house since he was master of it.

DAVID.

Nay, odds life! that is being too particular, indeed.

JENKINS.

Ay, to be sure; and yet he puts always such an easy good humoured face upon it, that people will

not call him a hunks for all that. One half of it I'm ſure would have made any other man paſs for a very curmudgeon. What has ſuch a man to do with a wife, unleſs he could get ſome ſober young lady, educated two hundred years ago, who has kept herſelf young and freſh all the while in ſome cave under ground along with the ſeven ſleepers, to ſtart up to his hand and ſay, "pray have me?"—As for my maſter, he would remain a bachelor if he could; but we young fellows who have only our perſons for our patrimony, muſt diſpoſe of them in their prime when they will fetch the higheſt price.

DAVID.

To be ſure, to be ſure! Princeſſes a piece for you! young men, now a days, are mightily puffed up in their own conceits. They are colts without a bridle, but they bite upon the bit at laſt. They are butterflies in the ſun, but a rainy day waſhes the colour off their wings. They ſail down the ſtream very briſkly, but it carries them over the ca-cartica——cataract (what ye call a water-fall ye know) at laſt.

JENKINS.

Faith, David! you ſtring up ſo many what do ye call 'em ſimilitudes in your diſcourſe, there is no underſtanding it: you are juſt like that there poet in the green chamber, that writes upon the windows.

DAVID.

He, drivling fellow! he has not ſenſe enough to

make a ſimilitude. If it were not for the words he contrives to make clink with one another at the end of every line, his verſes would be little better than what a body may call mere ſtuff.

Enter DOLLY.

DOLLY.

You'll never write ſuch good ones tho', for all your great wiſdom, Mr. David.

DAVID.

Ay, you're a good judge to be ſure! I'm ſure you could not read them though they were printed in big letters before your noſe, huſſy. You can tell us, I make no doubt of it, how his julep taſtes, and how his breath ſmells after the garlic peels that he takes to lay the cold wind in his ſtomach, and how his ruffled night-cap becomes him too; for you have been very ſerviceable to him of late, and not very ſparing of your viſits to his chamber of an evening; but as for his verſes, Mrs. Doll, you had better be quiet about them.

DOLLY.

I ſay his verſes are as pretty verſes as any body would deſire, and I don't care a ruſh what you ſay about his night-cap or his garlic.

DAVID.

Lord, Lord! to hear how women will talk about what they don't underſtand! Let me ſee now if you

know the meaning of the lines he has ſcratch'd on the middle pane of the north window:

" 'Twas not that orient bluſh, that arm of ſnow,
" That eye's celeſtial blue, which caus'd my woe,
" 'Twas thy exalted mind, my peace which ſtole,
" And all thy moving ſympathy of ſoul."

Now, can you underſtand that, miſtreſs madam?

DOLLY.

I ſay the verſes are very pretty verſes, and what does it ſignify whether one underſtands them or not?

DAVID.

And then upon the other pane cloſe by it:

" Give me the maid, whoſe boſom high
" Doth often heave the tender ſigh;
" Whoſe eye, ſuffus'd with tender care,
" Doth often ſhed the ſoft luxurious tear."

(*To* Jenkins.) Now this is Doll herſelf he means in theſe verſes, for he came to this houſe the very day that the beggar-woman ſtole her new ſtockings from the ſide of the waſh-tub, and I'm ſure ſhe ſhed as many tears about them as would have waſh'd them as white as a lily, tho' they were none of the cleaneſt neither, it muſt be confeſs'd.—If I were to write poetry ——

DOLLY.

If you were to write poetry! Don't you remember when you made that bad metre for Goody

Gibſon's grave-ſtone, and all the pariſh laugh'd at it?

" All ye gentle Chriſtians who paſs by,
" Upon this dumb ſtone caſt a pitying eye;
" I pray you for yourſelves, not me, bewail,
" I on life's follies now have turned tail."

And don't you remember when you went to church afterwards, how all the children of the village pointed with their fingers, and turn'd round their behinds to you as you paſs'd? If you were to write poetry, forſooth!

DAVID.

Devil take you, you filthy lying jade! it is well for you that I ſcorn to be angry with the likes of you.

DOLLY *(laughing in his face).*

" I pray ye for yourſelves bewail,
" For I on life have turned tail."

(David *takes up a ſtool and runs after her to caſt it at her head.)* O mercy! my head, my head!

JENKINS *(preventing him.)*

Nay, David, I can't ſee a lady uſed ill in my preſence. Conſider, my good friend, a man in a paſſion may be compared to three things.

DAVID.

Devil take your three things, and all the things that ever were in the world! If I but once get hold of her!

Enter LANDLADY.

LANDLADY.

What's this noiſe for?—are you all mad to make ſuch a diſturbance and gentle-folks in the houſe? I proteſt, as I am a living woman, you make my houſe more liker a Bedlam than a ſober Inn for gentle-folks to ſtop at.

DAVID (*ſtill ſhaking his fiſt at* Dolly).

If I could get hold of her, I would dreſs her! I would curry-comb her!

LANDLADY.

Won't you have done with it yet? curry-comb your horſes, and let my maid alone. They ſtand in the ſtable poor things in dirty litter up to their bellies, while you ſit here prating, and preaching as tho' you were the vicar of the pariſh.

DAVID.

Muſt one be always attending upon a parcel of damn'd brutes, as tho' they were one's betters? muſt a body's arm never have a moment's reſt?

LANDLADY.

Let thy tongue reſt a while, David: that is the member of thy body that haſt moſt reaſon to be tired. And as for you, Doll, mind your own work, and other people will leave you alone. Have you pluck'd the crows for the pigeon-pye yet, and

ſcraped the maggots from the ſtale mutton? well do I know there's ne'er a bit of all this done; we ſhall be put to ſuch a hurry ſcurry to get the dinner dreſs'd, that all the nice victuals will be ſpoil'd *(bell rings)*. O lud, lud! how they do ring them bells! Run and ſee what's wanted, Dolly. *(Exit* Dolly.) This comes of making a noiſe, now! *(Exit* Jenkins.

DAVID.

The greateſt noiſe has been of your own making, I'm ſure.

LANDLADY.

O dear me! what will this houſe come to! It will turn my poor head at laſt.

Re-enter DOLLY *in a great hurry.*

DOLLY.

A coach, a coach! a coach at the door, and fine ladies in it too as ever my eyes beheld.

LANDLADY.

A coach ſay you! that's ſomething indeed. I wiſh the ſtairs had been ſcower'd this morning. Run and light a fire in the blue chamber.
(Exeunt Landlady *and* Dolly *ſeverally, in great haſte.*

DAVID.

I wonder what can bring theſe lady-folks out now in ſuch cold weather as this. Have they never a fire at home to ſit by, in a plague to them!

They'll bring as many vile ſmoking beaſts with them, as will keep my poor arms ——

(Exit grumbling.

Re-enter LANDLADY, *ſhewing in* LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, *and* HANNAH, *followed by a* Maid *carrying boxes, &c.*

LANDLADY.

O la, ladies! I am ſorry the fires an't lit: but I have juſt ordered one to be lit in the blue chamber, and it will be ready immediately. I am ſure your ladyſhips muſt be ſo cold; for it is to be ſure the ſevereſt weather I ever ſee'd.

LADY GOODBODY.

We ſhall warm ourſelves here in the meantime.

MISS MARTIN.

What place can be ſo comfortable in a froſty morning as a ſtool by the kitchen fire?

(Sits down on a ſtool by the fire.)

LANDLADY.

O dear, ladies! here are chairs. *(Sets chairs for them.)*

LADY GOODBODY *(to* Maid).

Here is a ſeat for you too, Hopkins, ſit down by the fire.

HOPKINS.

I thank you, my lady, I muſt look after the things in the coach. *(Sets down the box, &c. and exit.)*

LADY GOODBODY *(to* Landlady).

Have you many travellers, ma'am, in this road?

LANDLADY.

O yes, my lady, a pretty many. We had a little time ago my Lady the Counteſs of Poſtaway, and a power of fine folks with her. It was a mighty cold day when ſhe came, madam, and ſhe was a mighty good humour'd lady to be ſure: ſhe ſat by the fire here juſt in that very corner as your ladyſhip does now.

MISS MARTIN.

It has been a highly-honour'd nook indeed.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray ma'am, what have you got in the houſe for dinner? for it ſnows ſo faſt I think it will be impoſſible for us to get any further to day.

LANDLADY.

O la, to be ſure! I have got, my lady, a nice pigeon-pye for dinner, and ſome very tender mutton. But do you know, my Lady Counteſs would dine upon nothing but a good diſh of fried eggs and bacon, tho' we had ſome very nice things in the houſe I'll aſſure you. I don't ſay, to be ſure, that quality

are all fond of the ſame kinds of victuals; but ſometimes it will ſo happen that pigeons will not be equally plump and delicate as at other times, let us do what we will with them; and the mutton being fed upon old graſs, my lady, will now and then be a little ſtrong taſted or ſo.—O dear me! if it had not been all eaten up two days ago, I could have given you ſuch a nice turkey! it was to be ſure as great a beauty as ever was put upon a ſpit. Howſomever, you may perhaps after all, ladies, prefer the eggs and bacon.

MISS MARTIN.

Yes, my good ma'am; the eggs and bacon that may be eaten to-day will anſwer our purpoſe rather better than the turkey that was eaten yeſterday.

LADY GOODBODY.

Have you any company in the houſe?

LANDLADY.

O yes, my lady, we have a good pleaſant gentleman, who has been here theſe three days, becauſe his ſervant was taken ill upon the road, Sir John Hazelwood, and his nephew with him; and we have a ſtrange kind of a gentleman who has been here theſe three weeks, juſt to be quiet, as he ſays himſelf, and to ſtudy the muſics, tho' I can't ſay we ever hear him play upon any thing neither. Howſomever, he diverts himſelf all day long after his

own fashion, poor man, writing bits of metre upon the windows and such like, and does harm to nobody.

HANNAH *(after gazing for a long time at the things ranged over the chimney).*

There is a pair of candlesticks the very same with those we had in our bed-room at the last inn: look if they an't, the very fellows to them cousin, all but the little bead round the sockets. *(To* Miss M.)

LADY GOODBODY *(to* Hannah).

My good child, you are always observing things that nobody else notices. *(To* Miss M.) Sir John Hazelwood is an old acquaintance of mine; I'll let him know that I am here presently.

Enter DOLLY.

DOLLY.

The room is ready, ladies, and the fire very good.

LADY GOODBODY.

We shall go to it then. Let me have a candle, pray; I shall have some letters to seal by and by.

DOLLY.

Yes, ma'am; and mistress got some wax ones when the great lady was here, I'll bring you one of them.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, no, child! a tallow one will do well enough.

(*Exeunt* Lady Goodbody, Miſs Martin, *and* Hannah, Landlady *conducting them.*

Enter WILL.

WILL.

Yes, Doll, give her a tallow candle, and a ſtinking one too.

DOLLY.

The lady ſeems a very good lady, Mr. Sauce-box; and as to ſtinking candles I would have you to know we have no ſuch things in the houſe.

WILL.

That is plaguy unlucky then, for this is the firſt time ſince I came to the houſe that you have been without them.—Confound the old ſtingy hypocrite! I wiſh they ſmelt like carrion for her ſake.

DOLLY.

What makes you ſo bitter againſt the poor lady? I'm ſure ſhe is as civil a ſpoken lady as ——

WILL.

Yes, mighty civil, truly. I hate your ſmooth-ſpoken people: it is licking the butter off other people's bread that keeps their tongues ſo well oil'd. I drove like the devil to get here before the

ſnow came on; I ſpared neither myſelf nor my cattle to pleaſe her, and what do you think I had for my pains?

DOLLY.

I can't ſay: it is a long ſtage to be ſure.

WILL.

Paltry half-a-crown, an' be hang'd to her!

DOLLY.

But why did you take ſo much pains to pleaſe her? I never knew you do ſo before, but when you were promiſed a bribe for your trouble.

WILL.

Becauſe I tell you ſhe's a hypocrite, and would deceive Old Nick, if he were not as cunning as herſelf. When we paſſed thro' Middleton ſhe bought as many coarſe ſtockings as would have ſtocked a hoſier's ſhop; and her maid told me they were all to be ſent to her own eſtate to be given to the poor of the neighbourhood; ſo, thinks I to myſelf, this muſt be ſome rich liberal lady that gives away money with both hands, I won't ſtand upon trifles with her, and off I ſet like the deuce. But 'tis all a curſed lie: ſhe'll ſell them again, I'll be bound for it, and make a groat of profit upon every pair. I'll be revenged upon her! Hark ye, Doll; I'll give thee a new top-knot if thou'lt help me in any way to be revenged upon her.

DOLLY.

Nay, nay, you promiſed me one laſt fair, Will, and brought me home nothing but a twopenny bun after all. I know you well enough; ſo you may play your tricks off by yourſelf: I'll have nothing to do with you. *(Exit.*

WILL.

What ails the wench now, I wonder; ever ſince that there poet, as they call him, has been in the houſe, ſhe has ſpoken to me as if I were a pair of old boots. *(Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Parlour.*

Enter Sir JOHN HAZELWOOD *and* WORSHIPTON.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, Ned, here is a rich heireſs unexpectedly fallen in our way; you or I for her?

WORSHIPTON.

If women favour'd men for their merit, Sir John, I ſhould not preſume to enter the liſts with you: but, luckily, they prefer a good complexion to a good underſtanding; a well-made leg to what my grandmother uſed to call a well-order'd mind; and a very little faſhion to a great deal of philoſophy; which makes us good-for-nothing fellows come farther into their good graces than wiſer men think we are entitled to.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are very humble and very diffident truly: the meaning of what you ſay being ſimply this, that you are a mighty handſome fellow. Well, be it ſo; make as much of your perſonal qualifications as you can: it were hard indeed if they did not ſtand you in ſome good account, ſince you and your faſhionable brotherhood take no pains to acquire any other.

WORSHIPTON.

And they will ſtand us in good account, my good ſir. Upon my honour we treat the ſex in a much fairer manner than you do. She who marries one of us ſees what ſhe gets, but he who pretends to a woman on the ſcore of his mental accompliſhments, holds out to her a moſt deceitful lure. A man's temper and opinions may change, but he always wears the ſame pair of legs.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

There is ſome reaſon in this, I confeſs: and there is one advantage you have in thus tricking out your four quarters for the market,—they are in no danger of going off for leſs than they are worth. Your man of ton, as you call it, moſt commonly ends his career by marrying juſt ſuch a woman as he deſerves.

WORSHIPTON.

End his career! who the devil would marry if it were not to prolong it? A man may indeed ſometimes be tempted to marry a faſhionable beauty to pleaſe his vanity.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Or break his heart.

WORSHIPTON.

Poh, poh! there are more people who die of broken heads now o' days. A man may ſometimes marry a woman of rank to be look'd up to by his old friends.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Or down upon by his new ones.

WORSHIPTON.

You are cruſty now.—But a rich wife is the only one who can really excuſe a young fellow for taking upon himſelf the ſober name of huſband.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

If this is your opinion, you had better ſtill retain the more ſprightly one of bachelor.

WORSHIPTON.

And leave the heireſs to you, Sir John.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No, Worſhipton; there is not a woman now exiſting, as the world goes, that would ſuit me; and I verily think that here as I ſtand, with all my opinions and habits about me, I would ſuit no woman: I muſt e'en remain as I am.

WORSHIPTON.

I wiſh to God I could do ſo too: I ſhould aſk no better.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

What ſhould hinder you, young man?

WORSHIPTON.

I am under the neceſſity of marrying: my circumſtances oblige me to it.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I am at a loſs to comprehend the neceſſity you talk of.

WORSHIPTON.

Will three hundred a year and a commiſſion in the army keep a man's pocket in looſe money, my good ſir, ſupport a groom and valet, a pair of riding horſes, and a curricle?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I crave your pardon, ſir: theſe things being neceſſaries, you are perfectly in the right; and if

you chooſe to impoſe a diſagreeable reſtraint upon yourſelf for ſuch neceſſaries, nobody has any right to find fault with you.

WORSHIPTON.

Impoſe upon myſelf a reſtraint! Ha! ha! ha! pardon me! this is rather an amuſing idea of yours.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Why, you would not be baſe enough to marry a woman and neglect her.

WORSHIPTON.

No, Sir John; I ſhould pay her as much attention as women of the world now expect, and ſhe who is not ſatisfied with that muſt be a fool.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, pray heaven you may find one wife enough to be ſatisfied with you! But if you ſeriouſly mean to pay your addreſſes to Sir Rowland's heireſs, you muſt inform her of the real ſtate of your affairs. I'll have no advantage taken of a young woman under my eye, tho' it ſhould be for the intereſt of my family.

WORSHIPTON.

I ſhall pretend to nothing but what ſhe may be aſcertained of if ſhe has eyes in her head.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No, not ſo eaſily aſcertained as you imagine. There is many a handſome man in the world whom nature never made ſo. Flattery has ſoftened many a rugged viſage, and lick'd many an awkward cub into ſhape; and he who takes this method of becoming a pretty fellow before marriage, is bound in honour to continue it, that he may ſtill remain ſuch after marriage.

WORSHIPTON.

What! muſt I be repeating the ſame thing to her all my life long? Tell a woman once in plain Engliſh that ſhe is charming, and there is no danger of her forgetting it.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, deal honourably, and I ſhall rejoice in your ſucceſs.——But I muſt go to the ſtable and give directions to my groom: I ſhall return preſently. *(Exit.*

WORSHIPTON *(alone).*

Honourably! yes, yes, we are all mighty conſcientious in every thing that is for the intereſt of another. But watch me as you pleaſe, my good Sir John, you ſhan't find me out. What a plaguy thing it is to have an uncle of forty-one! What a devil of an age it is! for one has but little hope of a legacy from it, and it has, at the ſame time, all the cold, cautious, advice-giving ſpirit of

three ſcore and ten. This Sir Rowland's daughter is a good ſcheme, upon my ſoul. He muſt be ſickly, I think, from his always living at home in ſuch a retired ſituation. I dare ſay he'll die ſoon, and who knows but the lady may ſtep off too, being of a ſickly ſtock. Yes, I feel a perſuaſion within me that I am born to be a lucky fellow. But huſh! here come the ladies. The fat aunt walks firſt, and the rich heireſs follows. A genteel-looking woman, faith! this is admirable luck. But who is this awkward creature that comes ſneaking after them? ſome humble relation, I ſuppoſe.

Enter LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN *and* HANNAH.

LADY GOODBODY.

I beg pardon if I have made any miſtake; I thought Sir John Hazelwood ——

WORSHIPTON.

There is no miſtake, madam; Sir John will be here immediately. Permit me to place chairs.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are very obliging, but we have ſat ſo long in a cloſe carriage this morning, that we ſhould be glad to ſtand a little while. Sir John's politeneſs has made him ſacrifice his own convenience, I am afraid.

WORSHIPTON.

I am ſure he is well repaid in the honour he receives. (*To* Miſs Martin.) I hope, ma'am, you feel no bad effects from the cold journey you have had?

MISS MARTIN.

None at all, I thank you; we have juſt felt cold enough to make a warm room very comfortable after it.

WORSHIPTON.

What a charming diſpoſition, thus to extract pleaſure from uneaſineſs?

MISS MARTIN.

The merit of finding a good fire comfortable after a cold winter journey, is one that may be claim'd without much diffidence.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray, ſir, did you ever ſee ſuch a heavy fall of ſnow come on ſo ſuddenly?

WORSHIPTON.

Really, madam, I don't recollect. (*Turning again to* Miſs Martin.) But it is the character of true merit ——

LADY GOODBODY.

Pardon me, ſir, you have ſomething of the family face; are you not related to Sir John?

WORSHIPTON.

I have the honour to be his nephew, madam. (*Turning again to* Miſs Martin.) I ſhall fall in love with rough weather for this day's good fortune.

LADY GOODBODY.

I ſuppoſe, ſir, you are acquainted with the family of the Mapletofts in your county?

WORSHIPTON.

I believe I have ſeen them. (*Turning again to* Miſs Martin, *and continuing to ſpeak to her with much devotion.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*to* Hannah).

Well, my dear, you and I muſt talk together I find. How did you like the country we paſs'd thro' to day?

HANNAH.

La, aunt! it is juſt like our own; I ſaw no difference.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are fooliſh, child! is not our's a flat country clothed with trees, and this a bare and hilly one?

HANNAH.

La, I did not look out of the coach windows all the way, except when we ſtopp'd at the turnpike; and I'm ſure it is a little tiled houſe with a gate by the ſide of it, juſt like the one near our own entry; only that our's has got a pear-tree on the wall, and it has got ſome dried turf piled up by the door, with a part of an old wheelbarrow.

LADY GOODBODY.

Well, you'll have more obſervation by and by, I hope.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I am happy in the honour of ſeeing your ladyſhip and theſe fair ladies.

LADY GOODBODY.

And we reckon ourſelves particulary fortunate in meeting with you, Sir John; you are very good indeed to give up ſo much of your own accommodation to poor ſtorm-bound travellers. Allow me to preſent my nieces to you. *(After preſenting her nieces.)* It is a long time ſince we met, Sir John, you were then a mere lad, and I was not myſelf a very old woman.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I remember perfectly the laſt time I had the

pleaſure of ſeeing your ladyſhip, tho' being a bachelor ſtill, I don't care to ſay how long it is ago. Your brother Sir Rowland was with you then; I hope he is well.

LADY GOODBODY.

He is very well: I ought to have introduced his daughter to you particularly. (Sir John *going up to* Miſs Martin.) No, no! this *(pointing to* Hannah) is my brother Rowland's daughter. She is ſomewhat like her mother, who died, as you know, at a very early age, leaving him but this child.

(Worſhipton, *who is about to preſent with much devotion a glove to* Miſs Martin, *which ſhe had dropped, lets it fall out of his hand, and retiring ſome paces back, ſtares with aſtoniſhment at* Hannah.)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(to* Hannah).

I am happy to have this opportunity of paying my reſpect to the daughter of my old friend. I hope, madam, you will admit of this plea for being better acquainted.

LADY GOODBODY *(aſide to* Hannah).

Anſwer him child.

HANNAH *(curtſying awkwardly).*

My father is very well, I thank you, ſir.

MISS MARTIN *(looking ſlyly at* Worſhipton).

I fancy, after all, I muſt pick up this glove myſelf. I am afraid ſome ſudden indiſpoſition ——

WORSHIPTON *(confuſedly)*.

I beg pardon! I—I have a ſlight pain in my jaw-bone; I believe it is the tooth-ach.

LADY GOODBODY.

The tooth-ach! how I pity you! there is no pain in the world ſo bad. But I have a cure for it that I always carry about in my pocket for the good of myſelf and my friends: do ſwallow ſome drops of it; it will cure you preſently *(offering him a phial)*.

WORSHIPTON *(retreating from her)*.

You are infinitely obliging, madam, but I never take any thing for it.

LADY GOODBODY *(following him with the phial)*.

Do take it, and hold it in your mouth for ſome time before you ſwallow it. It is very nauſeous, but it will cure you.

WORSHIPTON *(ſtill retreating)*.

Pray, madam, be ſo obliging as to excuſe me: I cannot poſſibly ſwallow it.

LADY GOODBODY *(preſſing it ſtill more earneſtly)*.
Indeed, indeed, it will cure you, and I muſt poſitively inſiſt upon your taking it.

WORSHIPTON *(defending himſelf vehemently)*.
Poſitively then, madam, you oblige me to ſay— *(breaking ſuddenly away.)* Peſt take all the drugs in the world! *(Aſide.)*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.
You muſt not, Lady Goodbody, inſiſt on curing a man againſt his will: he likes the pain perhaps: let him enjoy it.

WORSHIPTON *(returning)*.
Indeed I am very much obliged to your ladyſhip; I am much better now. Forgive my impatience; I don't know what I ſaid.

LADY GOODBODY.
I am very glad you are better, and I forgive you with all my heart, tho' it is a remedy that I have long had the greateſt faith in, diſtill'd by myſelf from the very beſt ingredients, and has cured a great many people, I aſſure you. *(To* Sir John.) So you took this lady for Sir Rowland's daughter? *(pointing to* Miſs Martin.) Do you ſee no traces in her countenance of my ſiſter and Colonel Martin? She loſt both her parents early, and ſhe has ever ſince been my child.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are happy in having ſuch a daughter.

LADY GOODBODY.

I am ſo: ſhe is a very good girl, and has many excellent qualities, which young women now a-days do but rarely poſſeſs.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I dare ſay ſhe is a moſt amiable companion, whom you would be very unwilling to part with.

LADY GOODBODY.

Nay, Sir John, I am not ſo ſelfiſh neither, but that I ſhould willingly give her up to a good huſband.

MISS MARTIN (*aſide to* Lady Goodbody).

Bleſs me, ma'am, why will you do this? you know I can't bear it. (*Aloud to* Sir John.) You muſt not truſt Lady Goodbody's account of me; for if ſhe thought ſize neceſſary to make a woman perfect, it would be difficult to perſuade her that I am not ſix feet high.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Excuſe me, ma'am, I have always truſted to Lady Goodbody's opinions, and have never felt more inclination to do ſo than at this moment.

LADY GOODBODY.

She always behaves like a fool when ſhe is praiſed, and, excepting this, I don't know a fault that ſhe has.

(Enter a Servant announcing dinner.)

(To Miſs Martin.) Go before, my dear, and place my chair as you know I like it. *(Exit* Miſs Martin, *followed by* Sir John *leading out* Lady Goodbody.)

WORSHIPTON *(looking aſkance at* Hannah, *and then going up to her with an unwilling ſhrug).*

Permit me to have the honour——

(Exit, handing her out.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. Lady Goodbody, Miſs Martin, *and* Hannah, Sir John Hazelwood, Worſhipton, *and* Amaryllis, *diſcovered ſitting by a table, with wine and glaſſes, &c. before them.*

LADY GOODBODY.

But indeed, my dear Sir John, you ought to marry.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Indeed, my dear Lady Goodbody, I can't ſee that I am in duty bound ſo to do.

LADY GOODBODY.

Ah, but you are tho'! It would have made your good worthy grandmother ſo happy to have ſeen children of yours growing up to preſerve the honours of the family.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

It is too late now to think of pleaſing my grandmother after ſhe has been twenty years in her grave: your ladyſhip muſt offer ſome other argument to convince me.

LADY GOODBODY.

You owe it to your country then: all families who have good fortunes and good blood in their veins, ſhould be kept up for the ſake of their country. Is not every body ſorry when a houſe of this kind becomes extinct?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

If I thought my eſtates would ceaſe to bear corn and hay upon them in poſſeſſion of a different family, I ſhould marry to-morrow for the good of the country moſt certainly. I ſhould be very ſorry to be ſure to make every body ſorry for my want of heirs: but I remember when my neighbour Squire Wheelbarrow loſt his only ſon, there was as much merry-making, and as much ale drank at the very next fair, upon his own eſtate too, as if nobody had cared a ruſh about the matter. I believe you muſt produce ſome ſtronger reaſon ſtill, my lady.

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, do keep it up, madam! don't let him off ſo eaſily.

LADY GOODBODY. *(gayly).*

For the ſake of the ladies then, Sir John, you ought to be a bachelor no longer.

WORSHIPTON.

Now your ladyſhip attacks him from a ſtrong poſt.

AMARYLLIS.

Now, madam, you touch the fineſt chord of the ſoul's harmony.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

She does; I allow it. But I contend that I am of more ſervice to the ladies in my preſent ſtate than I could poſſibly be in any other. Have I not danced at our country balls with all the neglected damſels who could find no partners to lead them out for theſe ten years paſt? and do I not ſtill ſerve as a forlorn hope to half the deſponding maidens and unſettled widows of the weſt-riding of Yorkſhire?

WORSHIPTON (*to* Lady Goodbody).

Upon my honour, madam, he tells you ſerious truth as to the neglected damſels, for he has danced with them ſo often, that it would be no longer the faſhion for any other kind of damſels to dance with him if he had not too good an eſtate to be rejected.

LADY GOODBODY.

Your ſervices to the ladies are too general, Sir John; to make one deſerving woman happy is the beſt way of ſhewing your reſpect for them.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

And what lady, my good madam, will expect happineſs from an elderly ruſticated bachelor?

LADY GOODBODY.

No ſenſible woman diſlikes an agreeable man becauſe he may be paſt the heyday of his life. My niece here (*pointing to* Miſs Martin) has often ſaid to her giddy companions, that an agreeable man of forty is preferable to the frivolous young men of the world that one meets with every where now-a-days.

MISS MARTIN.

You would oblige me very much, my dear madam, if you would ſpeak your own ſentiments, without doing me the honour to make me ſo much wiſer than I pretend to be.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

If your ladyſhip pleaſes we ſhall drop this ſubject. I am obliged to you for your friendly advice, but it is not in my power to profit by it; for I cannot, for the mere love of being married, yoke myſelf to a bad wife; and I am ſo capricious and ſo ſtrange with my old-rooted habits, that I really don't deſerve to have a good one.

WORSHIPTON.

That is the very caſe with him madam; he muſt have, forſooth, ſuch a woman as the ſun never beheld: a woman of wit who holds her tougue; a good houſewife who teizes nobody with her eco-

nomy; and a woman who knows the world, and yet prefers retirement in the country, and his honour's amiable converſation, to every thing in it. May I be——if ever I require more of any woman than to be well dreſs'd and look pretty as long as I live.

LADY GOODBODY *(to* Sir John).

Do you tolerate oaths in your preſence?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I don't at leaſt encourage them by my example.

WORSHIPTON.

How ſhould you, my good ſir? you bury yourſelf ſo much in the country you ſcarcely know what oaths are in uſe.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

That is not my reaſon for abſtaining from them, however: if ever I ſhould betake myſelf to ſwearing, I ſhall give myſelf very little concern about the faſhion of the oath; ods bodikins will do well enough for me, and lack-a-dayſy for my wife, if I ſhould ever be happy enough, following Lady Goodbody's advice, to have one. But Mr. Amaryllis are you ſilent all this while? it is ſurely your turn next to tell us what kind of a woman you prefer: ſome very refined being undoubtedly.

AMARYLLIS.

Beauty, wit, faſhion, and economy are prized by

moſt men, Sir John, but let the maid whoſe tender ſenſibility, whoſe ſoft delicacy, whoſe ſympathy of ſoul gently animates her countenance, be my portion, and every other thing I can diſpenſe with.

MISS MARTIN.

You three gentlemen, at leaſt, are ſo far lucky in your taſtes, that you are in no danger of ever becoming rivals.

LADY GOODBODY.

I muſt own, however, Sir John's choice appears to me to be the moſt reaſonable, and not ſo difficult to be met with neither. My nieces ſpend many lonely months in the country with me, and Miſs Martin prefers it, tho' ſhe is naturally of a gay diſpoſition; why ſhould we not believe then that there are many young women in the world of the ſame character?

MISS MARTIN (*aſide to* Lady Goodbody).

For heaven's ſake, ma'am, give this up! you'll put me beſide myſelf.

LADY GOODBODY (*aſide to* Miſs Martin).

You're a fool, and don't know when one is ſerving you.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*to* Miſs Martin).

There is nothing can be ſaid in your praiſe, madam, that will not be readily credited; but to prefer country retirement, and a bachelor paſt the

noon of his days, is a ſingular taſte for a young and gay woman.

MISS MARTIN.

Perhaps it is ſo: but unluckily it is one to which I make not the ſmalleſt pretenſions. I love the amuſements of town to a folly; retirement is irkſome to me; and I hate a capricious old——*(ſtopping ſhort as if ſhocked at herſelf, with great embarraſſment.)*

LADY GOODBODY *(very angrily)*.

Miſs Martin: how can you be ſo perverſe!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Pray, my dear madam, let us not fall out about this fooliſh jeſt which we have kept up too long. Here comes a ſtrange original old fellow who is in the cuſtom of amuſing us a little after dinner, but he forgets that there are ladies with us at preſent.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray let him come, we ſhall be glad to hear him talk a little.

Enter DAVID.

DAVID *(to* Sir John).

A good afternoon to your honour.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

How do you do, my honeſt friend David?

DAVID.

As well as a dry mouth and an empty head will allow a poor ſilly fellow like me to be.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Ay, David, wiſe men always ſpeak modeſtly of themſelves, tho' they don't inſiſt upon every body believing them. Here is ſomething for thy dry mouth; you muſt drink a bumper to the ladies' healths.

DAVID.

Such ladies as theſe deſerve bumpers a-piece to their healths.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

So they do; and here's the firſt for you.

(Filling him a glaſs.)

DAVID *(drinking)*.

My humble reſpects to your Ladyſhip.

(To Lady Goodbody.)

LADY GOODBODY.

I'm proud of the reſpect of ſo wiſe a man, Mr. David.

DAVID.

O Lord, madam, why ſhould I be held in any account? What tho' a body may have a better underſtanding of things, and a better way of ſetting

his words in order, as it were, than another; 'tis all but the gift of God, and why ſhould a body be proud of it?

MISS MARTIN.

But folks will be proud of any gift, Mr. David, unleſs they be endued, like you, with the rare gift of modeſty alſo.

DAVID.

Faith, young lady, you're in the rights of it there. Here's to your very good health: here's to your ſecret inclinations.

MISS MARTIN.

I thank you; but you are waggiſh as well as wiſe.

DAVID.

O yes, madam! nothing comes amiſs to me. After I have been talking, mehap of the Pope, or the Emperor, or the land-tax, or the ſolemn league and covenant, I can juſt go and break my jeſts among the women as if I were no better than one of themſelves.

MISS MARTIN.

How wonderfully condeſcending to the poor ſilly women!

DAVID.

O yes, madam, I have no pride about me: I can juſt talk like one of themſelves. *(Drinking to*

Hannah.) My ſervice to you, young lady. *(Raiſing his voice.)* Yes, yes, commend me to the women: they don't envy any little wit that one may have. But conſcience, I care for the face of no man! *(Looking at* Amaryllis.) Some of them, mehap, have read more books than me, and can tell you the Latin for one word and the Greek for another, and the likes o' that; but for good deep ſenſe, and a knack at a compariſon, I'll defy the beſt of them all. Ods dickens! I could find ye out a ſimilitude for the ſun, moon, and ſtars, in the paring of a black pudding's end. *Laughing without, and* Will's *head ſeen peeping at the door which* David *had left a-jar.)*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

What's that?

DAVID.

By my troth, I've forgot my errand! I have brought the poor girl who ſings ſo well to divert your honours, and ſhe is waiting at the door with ſome ill-manner'd companions along with her.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray bring her in, we ſhall be glad to have a ſong from her.

(David *goes to the door, and leading in* Sally, *ſhuts it in* Will's *face with great indignation.)*

DAVID *(to* Sally).

Come in, huſſey, and let thoſe ſneering varlets

amuſe themſelves. Sing the ladies one of your new ſongs.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I believe they would rather have one of your old ones.

SALLY.

Will you pleaſe to have the Sailor's Courtſhip to the Tinker's Daughter; or, "My tatter'd Hoſe and clouted Shoon?"

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I rather think the clouted ſhoon will do beſt.

SONG.

Tho' richer ſwains thy love purſue,
In Sunday geer, and bonnets new;
And ev'ry fair before thee lay
Their ſilken gifts with colours gay;
They love thee not, alas! ſo well
As one who ſighs and dares not tell;
Who haunts thy dwelling, night and noon
In tatter'd hoſe and clouted ſhoon.

I grieve not for my wayward lot,
My empty folds, my roofleſs cot;
Nor hateful pity proudly ſhown,
Nor alter'd looks, nor friendſhip flown;
Nor yet my dog with lanken ſides,
Who by his maſter ſtill abides;
But how will Nan prefer my boon,
In tatter'd hoſe and clouted ſhoon!

MISS MARTIN.

She has a charming voice, and ſings with ſome ſkill.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Who taught you theſe ſongs, Sally?

SALLY.

My father, ſir; he's a fid——.

DAVID *(pinching her arm aſide.)*

Fiddler an't genteel; ſay he's a muſicianer.

SALLY.

He's a muſicianer, ſir.

(Worſhipton *laughs impertinently, and ſtares at* Sally, *who keeps retiring in confuſion as he ſtill continues to ſtare, and at laſt runs out.)*

DAVID.

Is the ſheep-faced fool gone?

(Exit after her in great indignation.

WORSHIPTON *(to* Amaryllis).

Let us go and coax her to return.

(Exit Worſhipton *and* Amaryllis).

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

She is very young, and we muſt excuſe her.

LADY GOODBODY.

There are more people here than her who ought to plead the ſame excuſe. Miſs Martin, you have behaved very ſtrangely, and can only be pardoned on account of your youth.

MISS MARTIN.

I have done ſo many fooliſh things for ſix-and-twenty years paſt, that you are really very good, my dear madam, to pardon me on that ſcore.

LADY GOODBODY.

What do you mean? what do you mean, child, by calling yourſelf older than you are?

MISS MARTIN.

I have been of age theſe five years, and moſt people, I believe, will call that ſix-and-twenty.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Your ſervant, ladies, we ſhall meet again at the tea-table. *(Exit.*

LADY GOODBODY.

Very well, very well, Miſs Martin! ſince you will be ſix-and-twenty, tho' you know well enough you want two months and a half of it, with all my heart. But allow me to tell you, a maiden of that age ſhould look pretty ſharply about her if ſhe would not ſtill remain a lonely maiden all her life.

MISS MARTIN.

I am ſure it were better to remain a lonely maiden all my life than take up with ſuch pitiful company as ſome of your good matrons do, and rather more reſpectable too.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, child; a married woman is always more reſpectable than a ſingle one, let her be married to whom ſhe will.

MISS MARTIN.

Indeed! Can one give to another what he is not poſſeſs'd of himſelf? Can a woman receive any additional reſpectability becauſe ſome drivelling, inſignificant man, whom all the world deſpiſes, has put a wedding-ring upon her finger!—ha! ha! ha! But I ſuppoſe a good ſettlement is the honour your Ladyſhip means.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, indeed: I ſay, every married woman is more reſpectable than a ſingle one, independently of all ſettlements. What elſe do you think would have induced me, with the fortune I had, to marry Sir Benjamin Goodbody? for his perſon was diſagreeable, and his beſt friends admitted he was no conjurer. Don't miſtake me, however, I mean no diſreſpect to his memory. He was a very good man, and I have lamented him ſincerely. And what elſe

do you think would have induced my couſin Frances to give her hand to that poor puny creature, Mr. Perewinkle, but to place herſelf in this reſpectable ſtate.

MISS MARTIN.

Ha! ha! ha! I did not expect to hear ſuch ſtrong examples quoted from my own family.

LADY GOODBODY.

Don't make a jeſt of it: I ſpeak ſeriouſly, and you ought to think ſeriouſly.

MISS MARTIN.

I think very ſeriouſly that, if you would not peſter me continually with attempts to make up a match for me with every man of fortune that falls in our way, I ſhould be very happy, my dear aunt, to live ſtill with you, and take care of your declining years, in return for the tenderneſs and attention you have beſtowed on my youth. Why would you put me away from you? are you tired of my company?

LADY GOODBODY.

Oh, Mary! talk not of taking care of my declining years: I ſhould be contented to be crippled or bed-ridden all my life, could I but ſee you happily and honourably married.

MISS MARTIN *(kiſſing* Lady Goodbody's *hand tenderly)*.

My dear aunt! pardon my petulance and eager-

neſs. I will ſtrive to pleaſe you more: but do give up the preſent purſuit, I beſeech you.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, no, my dear! I love you too well for that. But I am unfit to ſay any thing to you at preſent.

(Exit.

MISS MARTIN *(looking after her.)*

My dear, kind, perverſe aunt! you will be the death of me. *(To* Hannah.) Come, my dear, we'll retire to our rooms too. What have you been thinking of all this time?

HANNAH.

I have juſt been wondering whether my grandmother was chriſtened Hannah or Hanabella.

MISS MARTIN.

What puts that into your head?

HANNAH.

Becauſe Mr. Worſhipton ſaid at dinner, when my aunt call'd me Hannah, that ſhe ſhould have call'd me Hanabella, which is a prettier name.

MISS MARTIN.

Mr. Worſhipton has been amuſing himſelf.—Oh heigh ho! I wiſh we were at home again, in our old manſion in the north.

Enter HOPKINS.

HOPKINS *(gently putting her hand on* Miſs Martin's *ſhoulder).*

My dear child! pardon the liberty: I ſtill feel for you the affection of a dry nurſe: what is the matter with you?

MISS MARTIN.

Still the old grievance, my dear Hopkins; my aunt trying to make up a match for me.

HOPKINS.

Ay, poor good lady: ſhe can't leave that alone for the ſoul of her. She would make up matches at home for every country girl in the neighbourhood if ſhe could. I even believe, if I had not been once married already, which ſhe thinks ſufficient for the credit of any woman, ſhe would ſtill be for trying to make up a match for my old crazy bones, God help me!—But don't let it vex you thus, my dear ma'am: I have brought you ſomething that will pleaſe and divert you.

MISS MARTIN.

What is that, Hopkins?

HOPKINS.

A letter from my little boy whom my lady puts to ſchool, written with his own hand, dear little

fellow! and the firſt he ever wrote in his life. It begins "Dear Mother," and all as pretty as any other letter.

MISS MARTIN.

I thank you, my good Hoppy! I ſhall indeed have a pleaſure in reading it. Go with me to my room, and ſhew it me there: it does my ill-humour good to ſee thee ſo happy; I will ſtrive to think leſs of my own concerns. *(Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A ſmall room leading to other rooms in the houſe:* Jenkins *diſcovered ſtanding at one of the doors, behind which hang great coats, &c. beckoning to ſomebody who does not appear; preſently enters* Worſhipton, *ſtepping upon tiptoe.*

WORSHIPTON.

Thou haſt ſome intelligence for me?

(In a low voice.)

JENKINS.

Yes; the old lady and her woman are coming this way preſently to go to Miſs Martin's room, and the heireſs will follow them as ſoon as ſhe can find a glove that ſhe is ſearching for. I heard this juſt now as I liſten'd at her door; ſo conceal yourſelf here amongſt theſe great coats for a few minutes, and you may way-lay her as ſhe paſſes.

(Speaking in a half whiſper.)

WORSHIPTON.

Is my uncle ſtill reading in the next chamber?

JENKINS.

I believe ſo. *(Going to a door at the bottom of the ſtage, and liſtening.)* He is juſt now riſing to go away. (Worſhipton *ſhrinks back, and is going haſtily out.)* No, no! don't be afraid; he is gone out the other way to viſit old Rycroft, I ſuppoſe.

WORSHIPTON *(ſpeaking in a loud voice).*

Good then: we ſhall have the coaſt clear: let us hide ourſelves. Thou muſt remain with me, for I may have occaſion for thee.

(Hide themſelves amongſt the great coats.)

Enter LADY GOODBODY *and* HOPKINS, *talking as they enter.*

LADY GOODBODY *(in rather a low voice).*

Very true, Hopkins, and if my god-daughter turns out an induſtrious girl, I'll add ſomething to what ſhe ſaves myſelf, to get her a huſband; for you know ſhe is not very ſightly.

HOPKINS *(in a loud voice, having lingered ſome paces behind to pick up ſomething ſhe has dropt).*

Ay, there is plenty of huſbands to be had, my Lady, tho' a girl be ever ſo homely, if ſhe have but money enough. *(Exeunt* Lady Goodbody *and* Hopkins.)

WORSHIPTON *(behind the door)*.

Ay, they are talking of their heireſs now. They are deviliſhly ſuſpicious of deſigns upon her, but we'll jockey them for all that. Ha! here comes the game.

Enter HANNAH *(and* Worſhipton *comes from his concealment)*.

HANNAH.

O la! are you there, Mr. Worſhipton? I ſaw nobody here but the great coats hanging by the wall.

WORSHIPTON.

You are not offended, I hope, that a great coat ſhould be turned into ſomething that can ſpeak to you, and gaze upon you, and admire you, Miſs Clodpate. *(Ogling her.)*

HANNAH.

La, now! it is ſo droll!

JENKINS *(peeping from his hiding-place)*.

Droll enough, by my faith!

WORSHIPTON.

I have been waiting here concealed a long time for this happineſs; for your aunt is ſo jealous I can

find no opportunity of ſpeaking to you. She knows well enough it is impoſſiible to behold ſuch beauty and attraction without ——— pardon me: you know very well what I would ſay to you if I durſt.

HANNAH.

La, no! how ſhould I know. Do you mean that I am beautiful, and what d'ye call it?

WORSHIPTON.

Indeed I do: your beauty muſt be admired, tho' your prudent aunt does all ſhe can to conceal it.

HANNAH.

La, now! you ſay ſo becauſe my hair has been allowed to grow ſo long, and aunt and every body ſays that my ears are the prettieſt thing about me. But it an't aunt's fault: I ſhall have it cut when we go to town. *(Putting her hair behind her ears awkwardly with her fingers, and beginning to look rather briſk.)*

WORSHIPTON *(looking at them with affected admiration.)*

O, beautiful indeed!

JENKINS *(peeping from his hiding-place).*

Ay, I thought the beauty lay hid under ſome ſnug covert or other: it was deviliſhly well conceal'd by my faith!

HANNAH.

La, now! did you think they were as pretty as they are?

WORSHIPTON.

I muſt confeſs I ſhould have expected to find them ſomewhat of a longer ſhape. But conceal them for pity's ſake, my charming Hannah: this is dangerous.

HANNAH.

Hanabella, you know.

WORSHIPTON.

O yes, Hanabella I mean. It is dangerous to look upon ſo much beauty, when one at the ſame time thinks of the extraordinary accompliſhments of your mind.

HANNAH.

La, now! who has told you that I got by heart ſix whole parts of the hundred and nineteenth pſalm, word for word, in the ſpace of two mornings only, and every body ſaid it was very extraordinary? Somebody has told it you I know.

WORSHIPTON.

No, nobody; I juſt found it out myſelf.

HANNAH.

La, now! that is ſo wonderful! Aunt herſelf

ſaid that my couſin Martin could not have done it ſo well.

WORSHIPTON.

Your couſin Martin! would any one compare you together? Don't you know how much every body is delighted with you?

HANNAH.

La, no! nobody tells me any thing about it.

WORSHIPTON.

Indeed! that is very extraordinary: but they have their own ends in that. Don't they watch you, and keep always ſomebody near you?

HANNAH.

To be ſure my aunt often deſires my couſin to take care of me when we go out.

WORSHIPTON.

I thought ſo.—Ah! my charming Hanabella! *(Sighs two or three times, but ſhe continues ſtaring vacantly, without taking any notice of it.)*

JENKINS *(aſide to* Worſhipton *as he walks near his hiding place, rather at a loſs what to do).*

Give a good heavy grunt, ſir, and ſhe'll aſk what's the matter with you: mere ſighing is no more to her than the blowing of your noſe.

WORSHIPTON *(ogling* Hannah, *and giving a groan)*.
Oh! oh!

HANNAH.

La! what is the matter with you? have you the ſtomach ach? My aunt can cure that.

WORSHIPTON.

Nay, my dear Hanabella, it is yourſelf that muſt cure me. I have got the heart-ach. It is your pity I muſt implore. *(Kneeling and taking her hand.)*

HANNAH.

O, ſure now! to ſee you kneeling ſo—it is ſo droll! I don't know what to ſay, it is ſo droll.

WORSHIPTON.

Say that you will be mine, and make me happy: there is nothing a lover can do, that I will not do to pleaſe you.

HANNAH.

Miſs Languiſh's lover made ſongs upon her.

WORSHIPTON.

I'll do ſo too, or any thing: but don't let your aunt know that I have ſpoken to you, ſhe would be ſo angry.

HANNAH.

O no! ſhe is very fond of people being married.

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, but ſhe will be angry at us tho'; ſo don't tell her, nor Miſs Martin, nor any body a word of the matter. Do promiſe this, my charming Hanabella! my life depends upon it. *(Kneeling again, and taking her hand.)* O don't pull away from me this fair hand!

HANNAH.

La! I'm ſure I an't pulling it away.

WORSHIPTON *(ſtarting up ſuddenly from his knees).* There's ſomebody coming. *(Runs out and leaves* Hannah *ſtrangely bewildered, and not knowing where to run.)*

HANNAH.

O dear, dear! what ſhall I do!

Enter HOPKINS.

HOPKINS.

What is the matter, Miſs Clodpate? My Lady ſent me to ſee what is become of you: are you frightened for any thing, that you keep ſtanding here in ſuch a ſtrange manner?

HANNAH.

O la, no! but I juſt thought ſomehow, that you would think there was ſomebody with me. (Hopkins *looks about the room ſuſpiciouſly.)* O no: you

need not look for any body: thoſe are only great coats by the wall, you ſee; and Mr. Worſhipton's an't there, you ſee; for his has got five capes to it, and the cloth is of a much lighter colour, and it has got more button-holes to it too than any body's elſe in the houſe.

HOPKINS *(ſtill ſtaring ſtrangely about).*

Mr. Worſhipton's! was he here?

HANNAH.

La, no! an't I juſt telling you that he an't here?

HOPKINS *(aſide).*

Well this is droll enough too—but no, no! it can't be any thing neither. *(Aloud.)* Your aunt is impatient for you, Miſs Clodpate.

HANNAH.

O la! I'm going to her directly.

(Exeunt Hannah *and* Hopkins.

JENKINS *(coming forward from his hiding-place, and ſhrugging up his ſhoulders as he looks after* Hannah).

This is the price my maſter is willing to pay for his curricle and his horſes.

Re-enter WORSHIPTON.

WORSHIPTON.

I think we have done pretty well, Jenkins, for the firſt onſet.

JENKIKS.

Yes to be ſure, ſir; but—but—

WORSHIPTON.

But what, Jenkins?

JENKINS.

Pardon my freedom, ſir:—but don't you think ſhe is rather too great a fool for ——

WORSHIPTON.

Poh! poh! poh! ſhe is all the better for that: it is a great advantage, and one that I am certain of.

JENKINS.

As to the certainty of it nobody will diſpute that, I believe.

WORSHIPTON.

Don't trouble thy head about it, if I'm ſatisfied. And remember the caution I gave you to ſay nothing, in the way of aſking queſtions at the ſervants, to lead them to ſuſpect what we are about.

JENKINS.

Don't be afraid of that, ſir: I can't if I would; for the man-ſervant that attends them is a country booby, who has not been in the family a fortnight, and knows nothing at all about it; and my Lady's woman, with her ſtaunch old-faſhion'd notions, has

taken ſuch a diſlike to me that I hate to have any thing to ſay to her.

WORSHIPTON.

So much the better. Yes, yes! things will go ſwimmingly on: I ſhall ſoon jockey them all.

(Exeunt.

SCENE III. *A chamber all littered over with books, papers, old coats, ſhoes, &c. &c.* Amaryllis *diſcovered ſitting by a table with a pen in his hand, and paper before him. After muſing ſome time, he writes and then blots out what he has written.*

AMARYLLIS *(to himſelf).*

This won't do: it does not ſound well. What a teaſing thing it is, when one has got a beautiful line, to be ſtopp'd thus for want of a good rhyme to couple with it! *(repeating with great emphaſis and geſticulation)*

" On thy ideal pinions let me fly,
" High-ſoaring Fancy, far above the ſky:
" Beyond the ſtarry ſphere towering ſublime,
" Where vulgar thought hath never dar'd to—

No, climb does not pleaſe me: it is too heavy a motion for thought. *(Muſing and rubbing his forehead.)*

" Beyond all thought inſpiring vulgar rhyme."

No, that won't do neither. *(Muſing again and biting his nails.)* Peſt take it! if I ſhould bite my

fingers to the quick it won't come to me. *(A gentle knock at the door.)* Who's there? *(in an angry voice.)*

DOLLY *(half opening the door).*

'Tis I, ſir: does your fire want coals?

AMARYLLIS *(in a ſoftened voice).*

O, it is you, Dolly. Come in and ſee, my good girl. *(Enter* DOLLY, *and pretends to be buſy in putting the room in order, whilſt* Amaryllis *takes his pen and begins ſeveral times to write, but as often lays it down again, looking at the ſame time over his ſhoulder at her.)* Plague take it! ſhe puts it all out of my head. *(Leans his arm on the table for ſome time, ſtill looking frequently about to her.)* Faith, I believe ſhe has a ſneaking kindneſs for me, ſhe finds always ſo many little things to do in my room. She's a good, roſy, tight girl, on my ſoul! *(Aſide.)* No, my pretty Dolly, that book is too heavy for you: I'll put it in its place. *(Getting up with great animation and running to her.)*

DOLLY.

O no, ſir! I'll do it very well myſelf. I juſt thought, as how your room would be in confuſion, and ſo ——

AMARYLLIS.

And ſo you came to put my head into confuſion too, you little baggage.

DOLLY.

O ſure! I hope not, ſir.

AMARYLLIS.

You're a ſly gipſy, Dolly. But you think of me ſometimes then, eh? *(Pinching her ear and patting her cheek.)*

WORSHIPTON *(without)*.

Amaryllis! Amaryllis! are you at home, Amaryllis?

Amaryllis *runs back to his table again, and pretends to be writing, without attending to the inkſtand and ſeveral books which he overſets in his haſte, whilſt* Dolly *makes her eſcape by the oppoſite door juſt as* Worſhipton *enters.)*

WORSHIPTON.

I heard you were at home, ſo I made bold to enter. What, writing ſo compoſedly after all this devil of a noiſe?

AMARYLLIS *(looking up with affected apathy)*.

Yes, I believe the cat has been playing her gambols amongſt my books.

WORSHIPTON.

It may have been the cat, to be ſure, for thoſe creatures have witchcraft about them, and can do many wonderful things o' winter nights, as

my old nurſe uſed to tell me; but if you had told me it was half a dozen of dogs that made ſuch a noiſe, I ſhould ſcarcely have believed you. Cats too can put on what forms they pleaſe, I've been told; and tho' they generally aſſume that of an old woman, your's has been more civil to you, I believe, in taking the more agreeable form of a young one. I caught a glimpſe of her, Amaryllis, as ſhe fled into the other chamber.

AMARYLLIS.

Poh! Dolly has been putting my books in order: is ſhe gone? *(Pretending to look round for her.)*

WORSHIPTON.

Well, well, never mind it! I came on a little buſineſs to you, elſe I ſhould have been ſorry to diſturb you; for I know well enough you are always employed about ſome ſublime thing or other.

AMARYLLIS.

You are too flattering.—You come upon buſineſs?

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, Amaryllis, and you are ſo good-natured, that I ſhan't make any preamble about it. I want to pleaſe a lady, or make a lady believe I am pleaſed with her, which is the ſame thing, you know; and I want to borrow one of your poems that I may preſent it to her as written in praiſe of

herſelf. However, ſhe is not very refined in her taſte, any common-place thing will do.

AMARYLLIS.

I am infinitely flatter'd, Mr. Worſhipton, that you ſhould apply to me for a common-place thing. Since this is the ſtyle of poetry that ſuits you at preſent, I can't help thinking you might have ſucceeded pretty well in writing it yourſelf.

WORSHIPTON.

Poh, now! you don't take my meaning. I meant any little piece that has coſt you little time or ſtudy, will do very well for my purpoſe: I ſhould be very ſorry to take one of your good ones.

AMARYLLIS.

Sir, I have beſtowed ſome time and ſtudy upon all my pieces, and ſhould be rather unwilling to think I had any other to offer you.

WORSHIPTON.

How perverſe you are in miſunderſtanding me! The beſt poet that ever lived has a beſt and a worſt poem, and I only make the humble requeſt to have one of your leaſt ſublime ones. Do, my dear friend, look thro' your budget. Many of your works, I know, are maſter-pieces, and I have had a great deſire for a long time to hear you read ſome of them, but was unwilling to diſturb you of an evening.

AMARYLLIS *(ſoftened)*.

I believe I muſt find ſomething for you. Will you have a love-ſong or a ſonnet?

WORSHIPTON.

Any of them will do; ſhe does not know the one from the other.

AMARYLLIS *(taking papers from his table)*.

Here are verſes addreſſed to Delia playing on the lute.

WORSHIPTON *(taking it)*.

This will do very well; for tho' I don't believe ſhe plays upon the lute, it will be civil to ſuppoſe that ſhe does, till we really know the contrary.

AMARYLLIS.

You ſpeak lightly of the lady, Worſhipton, for a lover.

WORSHIPTON.

I am not ſo refined in my ideas of theſe matters as you are, Amaryllis. I am a man of the world, and that character can't be ſupported long on a ſlender fortune: the lady is very rich.—But mum: not a word of this to any one.

AMARYLLIS.

You may depend upon me. But you ſaid you ſhould like to hear me read ſome of my poems. I

am not very buſy at preſent; I will indulge you with pleaſure.

WORSHIPTON.

You are extremely obliging.—For a man pretty well received by women of the firſt circles, as I believe without vanity I may ſay of myſelf, it would be a ſilly trick to marry at all, did not my circumſtances compel me to it; but I ſhall make ſuch a choice of a wife as ſhall make me paſs as much as poſſible for a ſingle man ſtill.

AMARYLLIS *(impatiently)*.

Very well!—I have a poem here which I think you will be pleaſed with.

WORSHIPTON.

You are very good indeed.—But you ſee how I am circumſtanced: I muſt have fortune.—How fooliſh it was in the Marchioneſs of Edgemore to think I was going to elope with Lady Suſan! I never paid more than common attention to her in my life. It is impoſſible for me to marry without fortune.

AMARYLLIS *(ſtill more impatient)*.

Well that is all very true.—But here is a paſtoral which you will not, I hope, find unworthy your attention, if you will have the goodneſs to give it me.

WORSHIPTON.

You are infinitely obliging; but I am extremely ſorry my time will not at preſent allow me ſo great a pleaſure.

AMARYLLIS.

Then I'll read you this elegy, which is ſhorter.

WORSHIPTON.

I'm really obliged to you, but ——

AMARYLLIS.

Or perhaps you would like to hear my grand ode, which is in the next room. *(Runs out to fetch it.)*

WORSHIPTON *(alone)*.

How that man peſters one with his damned vanity. Shall I make my eſcape while he is gone? No, no! that would be too rude: I'll try another way of getting off.—Worſhipton! Worſhipton! *(Calling out with a feigned voice.)*

Re-enter AMARYLLIS, *with his poem in his hand.*

AMARYLLIS.

Now, Worſhipton, I'll ſhew you what I believe, without vanity, I may call hitting off the figurative and ſublime ſtyle in poetry, pretty well.

WORSHIPTON.

I beg pardon: I am extremely mortified, but I cannot poſſibly ſtay to hear it now, for Sir John

waits without calling for me, and I muſt poſitively go to him. Did you not hear him call very loud?

AMARYLLIS.

O, if Sir John is without we can aſk him in, and he ſhall hear it too. *(Going towards the door.)*

WORSHIPTON *(ſtopping him eagerly)*.

No, no, my good friend, not now, if you pleaſe: it is impoſſible: we ſhall hear you another time.

AMARYLLIS.

I ſhall be at home all the evening; ſhall I expect you half an hour hence?

WORSHIPTON.

No, not quite ſo ſoon, I thank you; we ſhall be engaged. But we ſhall have great pleaſure very ſoon—good bye to you. *(Hurrying away.)*

AMARYLLIS *(ſtopping him)*.

In an hour then, perhaps, I may expect you: I ſhall be at leiſure all the evening.

WORSHIPTON.

Really you are moſt exceedingly obliging, but I am afraid it will not be in our power. Excuſe my haſte, I am very much diſappointed. *(Going haſtily.)*

AMARYLLIS *(ſtopping him again.)*

Nay, ſurely after ſupper you can contrive to come to me.

WORSHIPTON.

O, no, no! one has enough to do then to digeſt the horrible eating of this diabolical inn, without ſurfeiting one's ſelf—I beg pardon! without giving one's ſelf the pleaſure, I meant to ſay, of —— excuſe me! excuſe me! I muſt not keep him waiting any longer; you heard how loud he call'd me: I am extremely diſappointed indeed.

(Exit, breaking from him in great haſte.

AMARYLLIS *(looking after him angrily.)*

Well, let him go, pitiful fellow! he is ſo taken up with himſelf and his own little paltry vanity, he has neither capacity nor taſte to reliſh high poetry.

(Exit very majeſtically.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

A dark narrow paſſage-room, with the door of an adjoining chamber left open, in which are diſcovered Lady Goodbody, Miſs Martin, *and* Hannah.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *and* WORSHIPTON.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

THE light is gone out: let us wait here till David brings us another candle. Ha! is it fair to wait here? *(Perceiving the ladies.)*

LADY GOODBODY *(within to* Miſs Martin).

Indeed, Mary, you ought to conſider yourſelf as very fortunate in having the opportunity of pleaſing an agreeable man.

MISS MARTIN *(within).*

Mr. Worſhipton do you mean?

WORSHIPTON *(in a low voice, ſtealing eagerly nearer the door).*

They are talking of me, dear creatures; let us hear what they have to ſay upon this ſubject.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Fye, Worſhipton! would you turn eve-dropper?

LADY GOODBODY. *(within).*

No, you know well enough it is Sir John I mean.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(drawing alſo near the door).*

Ha! talking of me too. Well, if people will converſe with their doors open, there is no help for it.

MISS MARTIN *(within).*

How ſhould I know who your Ladyſhip means by an agreeable man?

LADY GOODBODY.

You may know at leaſt who I do not mean; for that poor frivolous fine gentleman can be agreeable to nobody.

WORSHIPTON *(aſide to himſelf).*

Old hag! her face is as ſenſeleſs and as coarſe as a red-topped January turnip.

LADY GOODBODY *(within).*

Sir John is a man that any woman might like. He is a man of fortune.

MISS MARTIN *(within).*

So is our neighbour, Squire Numbſcull.

LADY GOODBODY *(within).*

Fye, child! Sir John is a well-made man, and—

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

And ſo I muſt like him for not being crooked.

LADY GOODBODY *(within)*.

You are both perverſe and fooliſh. Sir John—

MISS MARTIN *(within earneſtly)*.

If you have any love for me, aunt, drop this ſubject for ever: the very mention of his name is diſtreſſing to me.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(in a low voice, turning from the door quickly)*.

You need not be ſo vehement, fair lady: I have no intention to give you the ſmalleſt trouble.

LADY GOODBODY *(within)*.

I leave you to your own humours, Miſs Martin; you have got beyond all bearing with your nonſenſe.

(Exit into an inner chamber.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I thought her ſenſible, I confeſs; but how confoundedly pert and flippant ſhe has become.

(Aſide on the front of the ſtage.)

WORSHIPTON *(going to him conceitedly)*.

You ſeem diſturbed, Sir John.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Not a jot! not a jot, truly! It rather amuſes me.

Enter DAVID *with a candle, holding his ſpread hand before it as if to prevent it from blowing out.*

DAVID.

I ſhould have brought the candle ſooner, but I have but a ſhort memory, your honour *(to* Sir John), and a man with a ſhort memory is like a—

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No matter what he's like: go on with the light, and we'll follow thee. *(Exit* David, *looking very fooliſh.)* That fellow has become nauſeous with his ſimilies. *(As they are going out* Worſhipton *ſtops* Sir John.)

WORSHIPTON.

They ſpeak again; do ſtop here a moment.

HANNAH *(within).*

Would it grieve you, couſin, if my aunt were to propoſe Mr. Worſhipton to you inſtead of Sir John?

MISS MARTIN *(within).*

No, my dear, not at all.

WORSHIPTON *(in a low voice).*

You ſee I am in favour with the niece, Sir John, tho' the aunt gives the preference to you.

HANNAH *(within).*

I thought as much, for he's a very pretty gentleman, isn't he?

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

He is even ſo.

HANNAH *(within)*.

And he dreſſes ſo pretty and new faſhion'd, don't he?

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

It is very true.

HANNAH *(within)*.

And then he talks ſo clever, like the fine captain that run off with Miſs Money. He is as clever every bit, altho' he don't ſwear ſo much; an't he, Mary?

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

I make no doubt of it. And had Lady Goodbody laid her ſnare to catch him for me, it would not have grieved me at all.

WORSHIPTON *(in triumph)*.

Do you hear that, Sir John?

HANNAH *(within)*.

It would not have grieved you at all?

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

No, my dear; for with all theſe precious qualities of his, his good or bad opinion is of no conſequence to me. I could bear ſuch a creature to ſuppoſe I have deſigns upon him, without being uneaſy about the matter. *(Walking up and down diſturbed,*

and then talking to herſelf.) To appear to Sir John Hazelwood as a female fortune hunter, endeavouring to draw in a wealthy huſband for her own convenience—O, it is not to be endured! To be degraded in the eyes of the very man whoſe good opinion I ſhould moſt value—it is enough to make one diſtracted!

(Worſhipton *retires behind* Sir John *very fooliſhly, who remains fixed to the ſpot with ſurpriſe.)*

HANNAH *(within).*

Do you love Sir John?

MISS MARTIN *(within).*

No, my dear, I am not weak enough to do that, when I know I ſhall never be beloved again. Could I have gained his good opinion, I ſhould have been contented, without pretending to his heart.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(vehemently).*

But thou ſhalt have both, by this bleſſed hour!

MISS MARTIN *(within).*

But now, as my aunt carries on her attack, I don't know how to maintain my credit: I ſhall be compelled to be downrightly rude to him.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Ay, very right, very right, my brave girl!—It is a glorious girl! I adore her for her ſpirit.

HANNAH *(within)*.

It gets very cold: I'll ſhut the door now, for the ſmoke is all gone.

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

What, has the door been ſtanding open all this while?

HANNAH *(within)*.

Didn't you ſee me open it to let out the ſmoke?

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

I am ſo haraſſed and vexed I don't ſee what is before mine eyes: ſhut it directly.

(Hannah *ſhuts the door)*.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

We are dark now, but I hear David's footſteps in the paſſage. Poor fellow! I have affronted him. David! friend David! *(Calling.)*

Re-enter DAVID *with a light, looking very ſour.*

DAVID.

What do you want, ſir?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

To be lighted to our rooms, my good David.—Nay, don't look ſo grave, man. I ſpoke rather ſhortly to you, indeed, becauſe I was thinking of ſomething elſe at the time; but you are too wiſe,

my good David, to mind such small trifles as these.

DAVID *(with his face brightening)*.

Lord love you, sir! I have both given and taken short words ere now: that is nothing to me. But I wish I may remember to call your honour in the morning, for as I was a saying, a man with a short memory——

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yes, yes, let us have it all now, as we go along; and put this under your pillow to prevent you from over-sleeping yourself, my friend David.

(Giving him money.)

DAVID.

O Lord, sir, I can't refuse any thing your honour offers me, but there is no occasion for this.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Put it in your pocket, man: there is a virtue in it. *(They move on;* Sir John *following* David, *and* Worshipton *kicking his shins from side to side, with affected carelessness, as he goes after them.)*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(archly turning as he goes out)*.

Thou'rt making a strange noise with thy feet, Worshipton. *(Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Worſhipton's *chamber.*

Enter WORSHIPTON, *calling as he enters.*

WORSHIPTON.

Jenkins! Jenkins!

JENKINS *(without).*

Here, ſir.

Enter JENKINS *in his great coat and boots.*

WORSHIPTON.

Are you ready to ſet off for this ſame licenſe?

JENKINS.

Yes, ſir, in a moment.

WORSHIPTON.

Well, make good ſpeed then: there is no time to loſe. Remember all the directions and precautions I have given you: and think as thou goeſt along that thou art working for thyſelf as well as me, for thy ſervices ſhall be nobly rewarded. Thou ſhalt have a ſlice out of Sir Rowland that will fatten thee up by and by into a man of ſome conſequence. Good ſpeed to thee, my good Jenkins! and uſe thy diſcretion in every thing.—Haſt thou beſpoke muſic for our ſerenade?

JENKINS.

I have found a ſorry fiddler, who has got but three ſtrings to his violin, for the fourth is ſupplied

by a bit of pack-thread; and an old Highland piper, who has ſtopped here on his way from London to Lochaber; beſides a bear-leader, who is going about the country with his hurdy-gurdy.

WORSHIPTON.

Well, well! if they make but noiſe enough it will do. But the moſt important thing is to have the chaiſe in waiting behind the old mill, that while the muſic is dinning in the ears of the old lady and her woman, we may convey our prize to it without being ſuſpected. Have you engaged Will in our intereſt? and does he ſay the road between this and Middleton church is now paſſable?

JENKINS.

You may depend upon him, ſir, and the road too.

WORSHIPTON.

Thou art ſure I may depend upon him?

JENKINS.

Sure of it, ſir. He will do much, he ſays, to ſerve your honour, but he'll go thro' fire and water to vex the old beldame. Lady Goodbody he means: he owes her a turn, I believe, for a half-crown ſhe ſcrubbed off him when ſhe paid him for the laſt ſtage he drove her.

WORSHIPTON.

This is fortunate. Where is Sir John juſt now?

JENKINS.

With old Rycroft: he always gives him his draughts with his own hand, leſt it ſhould be neglected.

WORSHIPTON.

Then I may go to the ſtable without danger, and have ſome converſation with Will myſelf. By the bye I have never viſited that old ſick devil yet; do you tell him that I enquire for him ſometimes?

JENKINS.

I do, ſir, and Rycroft don't expect more from you.

WORSHIPTON.

Very well, that is enough.—But we loſe time. Here is money for thee: ſet off immediately.

(Jenkins *receives money and exit.*

WORSHIPTON *(alone).*

If this ſucceeds now, it will be a deviliſh lucky turn in my fortune; for I ſhould have found it a difficult matter to have lived much longer upon credit. *(Muſing a while.)* I wiſh after all it were a leſs expenſive thing to be a man of faſhion. Gold, as the proverb ſays, may be bought too dear.—No, no: it can't be bought too dear by one who knows how to ſpend it with ſpirit. I ſhall, at leaſt, have every thing my own way, for ſhe is a great fool; that is one good thing we are ſure of. *(Exit.*

SCENE III. *A paſſage or outer room.*

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD, *looking eagerly to the oppoſite ſide of the ſtage.*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Here comes a lady, but not the one I'm in wait for.

Enter HANNAH.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Good morning, Miſs Clodpate, I hope your morning dreams have not been unpleaſant: you are early up.

HANNAH.

I miſtook the hour when the clock ſtruck, for it is a queer-ſounding clock they have here, and don't ſtrike at all like the one we have at home.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Good young ladies like every thing at home beſt.

HANNAH.

Yes indeed I do, for it was made by Mr. Pendlam, the great clock-maker in London. Isn't he clock-maker to the king?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Indeed I don't know ma'am.—But what pretty gloves you have got, Miſs Clodpate; aren't they of a particular colour?

HANNAH.

La! do you think them pretty? My aunt ſays they are not pretty, but I think they are, and that was the reaſon why I bought them.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

And an excellent one too, madam. Pray when did you ſee your worthy father, Sir Rowland? I hope he enjoys as good ſpirits as he uſed to do long ago?

HANNAH.

I ſaw him the twenty-fourth of laſt September, and he was very well, I thank you, ſir.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Does he never leave home now?

HANNAH.

O, there is Miſs Martin coming; I muſt go away.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

And why muſt you go?

HANNAH.

Becauſe my aunt ſays —— in caſe you ſhould have any thing to ſay to her.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are perfectly right to do whatever yout aunt deſires you. (*Exit* Hannah.

Enter MISS MARTIN *by the oppoſite ſide*, Sir John *looking at her with great ſatisfaction as ſhe approaches. She curtſies ſlightly, continuing to paſs on.*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Good morning, madam.

MISS MARTIN.

Good morning, ſir.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Do you paſs me ſo haſtily, Miſs Martin? To run away ſo were enough to put it into a vain perſon's head to believe himſelf dangerous.

MISS MARTIN.

Perhaps then, yours is not without that idea.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yet I ought not to be flatter'd by it neither; for women, it is ſaid, fly from ſmall dangers, and encounter the greater more willingly.

MISS MARTIN.

Yes, Sir John, we are the reverſe of the men in this reſpect, which accounts likewiſe for your detaining me here.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Nay, in this you are miſtaken: it is no mean danger that proves my boldneſs at this moment. *(Placing himſelf between her and the door gayly.)*

MISS MARTIN.

Your boldneſs indeed is obvious enough, whatever I may think of your courage.—But I have no particular deſire to paſs this way: I can find out my way to the breakfaſt-room by another door if you have any fancy for ſtanding ſentry at this poſt. *(Turning to go by another door.)*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(quitting the door).*

And you will leave me thus ſcornfully. There is an old proverb I could repeat about woman's ſcorn.

MISS MARTIN.

I know your old proverb perfectly well, Sir John; and I am obliged to you for mentioning it at preſent, ſince it ſets me completely at liberty, without ill manners, to ſay, I am heartily tired of this parley. *(Exit with affected carleſſneſs.*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, this is ſtrange enough! ſhe will charm me, I believe, with every thing that is diſagreeable to me: for I diſlike a gay woman, I can't endure a talking one, and theſe kind of ſnip-ſnap anſwers I deteſt.—But I have been too particular in my notions about theſe matters: I have always been too ſevere upon the women:—I verily believe they are better kind of creatures than I took them for.——

Softly, however! I will obſerve her well before I declare myſelf. *(Exit.*

Enter AMARYLLIS, *with a coat in his hand, and dreſſed in his night-gown.*

AMARYLLIS *(alone).*

What a plague is the matter with the ſtring of my bell this morning that it won't ring! I wiſh my Dolly would come and bruſh this coat for me. *(Liſtening.)* I hear her voice coming up ſtairs; ſhe'll be here immediately. — This girl becomes every day more pleaſing and more neceſſary to me. Ever ſince I entered this houſe ſhe has aired my linen, ſet my ſlippers by the fire in a morning (for, good ſoul! ſhe heard me complain that I am troubled with a chillneſs in my feet), and done all thoſe little kindly offices about me with ſuch a native grace as beggars all refinement.—But what, indeed, are the embelliſhments of artful manners to the graces of ſimple unadorned nature?—She is at hand.—Dolly! my ſweet Dolly!

(Calling to her.)

DOLLY *(without.)*

Coming, ſir.

AMARYLLIS.

There is ſomething of natural harmony in the very tones of her voice.

DOLLY *(without, in a ſharp angry key).*

Get down to the kitchen, you vile abominable cur! Do you think I have nothing to do but mop the ſtairs after your dirty feet? Get down to the kitchen with you! *(The howling of a dog heard without.)* Yes, yes, howl away there! I'll break every bone in your ſkin, if you come this way again, that I will.

Enter DOLLY.

AMARYLLIS.

Why Dolly, my good girl, this is rather an unpretty way of talking.

DOLLY.

'Tis but the dog, ſir. Vile, naſty hound! he is worſer than his maſter.

AMARYLLIS.

Than his maſter?

DOLLY.

Yes, than his maſter, Mr. Worſhipton. His dog's tricks are like his own, for he don't care what trouble he gives to a poor ſervant.

AMARYLLIS.

So you don't love Mr. Worſhipton, Dolly? Should you have treated a dog of mine ſo, eh? *(pinching her cheek kindly.)* You ſmile at that queſtion, you gipſy: I know you would not.

DOLLY.

I ſhould indeed have had ſome more regard for the brute, ſo as he had belonged to your honour.

AMARYLLIS.

I thank you, my ſweet girl, but you ought to ſpeak gently to every thing.—And don't call me "your honour." I don't like to hear my pretty Dolly call me ſo.

DOLLY.

O daiſy! what ſhall I call you then?

AMARYLLIS.

Call me Sir, or Mr. Amaryllis, or when you would be very kind to me, my dear Mr. Amaryllis.

DOLLY.

My dear Mr. Amarals.

AMARYLLIS.

Amaryllis is my name, Dolly.

DOLLY.

Yes, yes! I know your name is Amarals.

AMARYLLIS.

No, child, Amaryllis.—But you'll pronounce it better by and by. And if my Dolly will take this coat and bruſh it for me, when ſhe brings it to my

chamber again, I have ſomething to ſay to her in private which will not, I hope, be diſpleaſing to her. *(Exit, looking tenderly at her.*

DOLLY *(alone).*

What can he have to ſay to me now? Ods dickens! I'll wager he means to buy me a new gown.—Faith! he means ſome other thing perhaps. Well, if he were not ſo much taken up with his books, and his papers, and his poetry, and ſuch traſh, I ſhould like mightily to keep a maid of my own, and be call'd Mrs. Amarals.—I'll bring it to this if I can. *(Going out with the coat.)* He ſhall bruſh his own coat then, howſomever. *(Exit.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Moon-light: a field or ſmall court behind the inn, and every thing covered with ſnow.*

Enter FIDDLER, PIPER, *and* HURDY-GURDY-MAN, *each with his inſtrument.*

FIDDLER.

How deviliſh cold 'tis! 'tis well we are fortified with roaſt beef and brandy, friend: didn't I tell you we ſhould want it all? (*To* Piper.)

PIPER.

Very true: but you would not keep a lady of family and condition waiting till we cramm'd ourſelves, Maiſter John.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Dat would be impolite in verite.

FIDDLER.

Damn me! if I would play with an empty ſtomach to the beſt lady in Chriſtendom. What the devil makes her fancy that our muſic will ſound better in this here cold field than within doors in ſuch a night as this? I likes to be ſnug myſelf, and I never likes to put any one to hardſhip.

PIPER.

Why thou art a good-humour'd, kindly-hearted fellow, John; I muſt ſay that for thee. But this is the true way for all love muſic, di na ye ken? Out among the high rocks, or under a caſtle-wall, man!—But now, as we are all to play thegether, as it were in a concert *(taking out his ſnuff-box, and rapping on the lid with an air of importance)*, di na ye think, gentlemen, it will be expedient to enquire firſt, whether we can play the ſame tunes or not, as I ſuppoſe none of us trouble ourſelves with muſic-books, and ſick like.

FIDDLER.

I can play a pretty many tunes, Piper, but none of them all goes ſo well on my fiddle as Ally Croaker.

PIPER.

Ay, that is good enough in town to play to an orange-woman under a lamp-poſt, or ſick like; but this is a lady of family, man, and ſhe muſt have ſomething above the vulgar.

FIDDLER.

Play any thing you pleaſe, then: it will be all the ſame thing in my day's work whether I play one thing or another.

PIPER.

Day's work, man! you talk about playing on your fiddle as a cobler would do about mending of ſhoes. No, no! we'll do the thing decently and creditably.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Suppoſe we do give her de little chanſon d'amour?

PIPER.

Song a moor! what's that?

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

I do play it very pretty on my hurdy-gurdy.

PIPER.

Ay, you may play it well enough, perhaps, for your Italian foreigners, or ſick like, that don't know any better; but any body that has been in Lochabar, good troth! would count it no better than jargon, man.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

But I do ſay when de peoples of my country hear your pipe, dey do ſo. *(Stopping his ears, and mimicking one who runs away.)* And I do ſay dat I play more better muſic dan you, one, two, ten, twenty times over.

PIPER.

Lord help ye, man! it's lang ſin pride began: will ye compare yourſelf to the Laird of M^cRory's piper.

FIDDLER.

A great affair to be ſure of the Laird of Mac-Rory's piper.

PIPER.

You mun eat a bow o' meal before you be like him tho'.

FIDDLER.

Thank God! I have more chriſtian-like victuals to eat.

PIPER.

Better than you or your grandfather either, ha' been glad o' worſe fare.

FIDDLER.

Yes, that may be the caſe in your country like enough, where, unleſs it be a louſy taylor, or ſick like *(mimicking him)*, few of you taſte any thing that has ever had life in it.

PIPER.

Sir, an' it were not for reſpect to the lady yonder *(pointing to the window where* Hannah *appears)*, I

would run this dirk into that naſty bulk of yours, and let out ſome o' the plum-pudding you pretend to be ſtuffed with, you ſwine that you are!

FIDDLER.

O never mind the lady, Maſter M^cRory; I'll box you for two-pence. *(Putting himſelf in a boxing poſture.)*

PIPER.

Done, ſir, for half the money. *(Putting himſelf in the ſame poſture.)*

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Deſe men very fooliſh: my hurdy-gurdy and I be but ſtrangers in dis country: we will keep out of de way. *(Retiring to a corner of the ſtage.)*

Enter WORSHIPTON *and* JENKINS.

WORSHIPTON.

Hold, hold! what is all this for? I hired you to give us harmony and not diſcord, and be damn'd to you!

FIDDLER.

You ſhall have that too, an'. pleaſe your honour.

WORSHIPTON.

But I want no more than I bargained for, ſo keep this for ſome other occaſion, if you pleaſe.

FIDDLER *(giving up)*.

Well, it don't ſignify, I can pick a quarrel with him another time.

PIPER *(to* Fiddler).

Since the gentleman deſires it, ſir, I ſhall let you alone for this time; but damn you, ſir, if you ſay a word againſt my country again, I'll make you a man of no country at all. *(They take up their inſtruments, and go to different ſides of the ſtage, ſtill making ſigns of defiance to one another.)*

WORSHIPTON *(going to the window)*.

Are you there, my charming love?

HANNAH.

Yes, I have been here ſome time.

WORSHIPTON.

I could not come ſooner.—Remember your promiſe; and in the mean time what muſic ſhall they play?

HANNAH.

Juſt let them play a concert.

WORSHIPTON.

A concert.—Well, gentlemen, you are deſired to play a concert.

FIDDLER.

That is to ſay we are all to play together. What ſhall we play? *(To* Piper.) Shall we play the Lady's Fancy?

PIPER.

A cuſtock for the Lady's Fancy.

FIDDLER.

The Soldier's Delight then?

PIPER.

A ——— for the Soldier's Delight! a tune for a two-penny alehouſe.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Don't mind him *(to* Fiddler), he be waſhpiſh; you and I will play Ma chere Amie.

PIPER.

Well, well! play what you pleaſe, both of you, but I'll play the battle of Killy Cranky, and hang me, if your "Ah Me" will be heard any more than the chirping of a cricket in the hearth. *(They begin to play, and the* Piper *drowns them both with his noiſe.)*

WORSHIPTON *(ſtopping his ears).*

Give over! give over! bleſs my ſoul! the ſqueaking of a hundred pigs and the ſow-driver at

their heels is nothing to this. *(Going to the window.)* Well, my love, how did you like the concert?

HANNAH *(above)*.

Very well, I thank you.

WORSHIPTON *(aſide)*.

A lady of precious taſte! *(aſide.)* But would it not be better to hear them one at a time? Which of them ſhall I deſire to play firſt? *(Aloud.)*

HANNAH *(above)*.

Bid that fiddler there, without the breeches, play me a tune on his bagpipes.

PIPER.

I muſt let you to wit, madam, that I am no fiddler, and the meaneſt man of all the M^cRorys would ſcorn to be a fiddler. My father before me was piper to the laird, and my grandfather was piper to the Highland Watch at the ſiege of Quibec; and if he had not piped long and well to them, madam, there wad ha' been leſs French blood ſpilt that day, let me tell you that, madam.

WORSHIPTON.

My good Mr. M^cRory, ſhe meant you no offence, I aſſure you ſhe reſpects your grandfather very much. Do oblige us with a tune on your bagpipes.

(Piper *makes a profound bow, and ſtanding by the ſide ſcene, half concealed, plays a Highland pee-bro.)*

WORSHIPTON *(to* Piper).

I thank you, ſir; your muſic is excellent: it is both martial and plaintive.—But where is our little warbler? Ha! here ſhe comes.

Enter SALLY.

Come, my good girl, can you ſing the ſong I gave you?

SALLY.

Yes, ſir.

WORSHIPTON.

Let us have it then.

SONG.

Ah, Celia, beauteous, heavenly maid!
In pity to thy ſhepherd's heart,
Thus by thy fatal charms betray'd,
The gentle balm of hope impart.

Ah! give me hope in accents ſweet,
Sweet as thy lute's melodious ſtrain;
I'll lay my laurels at thy feet,
And bleſs the hour that gave me pain.

WORSHIPTON.

Very well ſung, indeed. *(To* Hannah.) Don't you think, my charming Hannah, we have had muſic enough?

HANNAH.

Juſt as you pleaſe: I don't care.

WORSHIPTON.

I'll ſend them off then. *(To* Jenkins, *who comes forward.)* Take them all to the other ſide of the houſe, and make them play under Miſs Martin's window. You underſtand. *(Aſide.)*

JENKINS.

Yes, ſir. *(Exeunt* Jenkins *and muſic, and enter* Will, *who retires to a corner of the ſtage.*

WORSHIPTON *(to* Hannah).

How did you like my ſong, Hanabella?

HANNAH.

Very well: but la! it an't the ſong you promiſed to make upon me: it don't ſay one word about either you or I.

WORSHIPTON.

Ay, but it does tho'; for you are Celia, and I am the ſhepherd, and that is the faſhion of love-ſongs.

HANNAH.

Well, that is ſo droll!

WORSHIPTON.

So it is.—And now, my deareſt creature, fulfil

your promiſe, and come over the window to me; the poſtchaiſe is waiting for us.

HANNAH.

La! is it the yellow chaiſe that ſtands commonly in the yard?

WORSHIPTON.

I can't tell you what colour it is, but it carries us off to be married. Come over the window, my love.

HANNAH.

La! I didn't promiſe to go over the window: Aunt ſays they never do good who get over the window to be married: I only promiſed to run off with you.

WORSHIPTON.

But that is juſt the ſame thing. Do come now! there is no time to be loſt. You have only to ſet your foot upon that ſtone which juts out from the wall, and you are in my arms in an inſtant.

HANNAH.

No, no! old aunt Gertrude went over the window to be married, and ſhe fell and broke her leg, and never was married at all.

WORSHIPTON.

But you can't break your leg here, the wall is ſo low.—Come, come, there is no time to loſe.

HANNAH.

O no, no! I know I ſhall come to harm.

WORSHIPTON.

Do, my deareſt Hanabella, there is not the leaſt danger. *(In a coaxing tone of voice.)*

HANNAH.

O no, no! aunt Gertrude broke her leg, and I'm ſure I ſhall break mine too.

WORSHIPTON *(loſing all patience)*.

Damn your aunt Gertrude, and all the fools of the family! I'll give you leave to cut my head off if you fall.

HANNAH.

I'll go away, I won't ſtay here to be damned. *(Whimpering, and turning from the window)*.

WORSHIPTON.

Forgive me, my love; don't go away: I'll do any thing to pleaſe you.—What the devil ſhall we do?

WILL *(coming forward)*.

Don't preſs the lady to get over the window, ſir; I'll find a way of getting her out at the door, which I ſhall explain to you afterwards.

WORSHIPTON.

But her chamber enters thro' the old lady's; ſo how can you get her out?

WILL.

By unkennelling the old lady, to be ſure; I'll do that faſt enough.

WORSHIPTON *(to* Hannah).

Then wait in your chamber, my deareſt creature, till we come for you. *(Aſide as he goes off with* Will.) What a devil of a fool it is! who could have thought ſhe would have been ſo obſtinate. *(Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A ſmall Hall, with the doors of ſeveral rooms opening into it.*

Enter WORSHIPTON, *and* WILL *with a candle and burnt paper in his hand.*

WILL *(thruſting the burnt paper under one of the doors).*

Now, my good Lady Charity! I'll be even with you for the half-crown you ſaved off me.—She'll ſmell the burning ſoon enough, I warrant ye; for your notable ladies, like her, poke their noſes into every corner, and get out of bed at every little noiſe, to ſee that no rat be running off with one of their old ſhoes.—Do you go, pleaſe your honour,

and wait at that door there, which is the only one that opens to the ſtaircaſe, and I'll ſend the young lady to you immediately. You told her our plan?

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, I returned to the window, and told her.

WILL.

I have procured a truſty lad to drive in my place, and you'll find every thing as you ordered it.

WORSHIPTON.

I thank you, my good fellow: I'll make your fortune for this.

WILL.

I know your honour is a noble-minded gentleman. *(Exit* Worſhipton.

WILL *(alone, liſtening at the door).*

Yes, yes, ſhe ſmells it now: I hear her ſtirring. *(Bawling very loud.)* Fire! fire! fire! The houſe is on fire! Fire! fire! fire!

Enter LADY GOODBODY *in her night-clothes, followed* by Hannah.

LADY GOODBODY.

Mercy on us! how ſtrong I ſmell it here! Where are all the ſervants? Call every body up. *(Exit* Hannah *by the ſtaircaſe door.)* Is that the way out? Stay, Hannah, and take me with you.

WILL.

Your Ladyſhip had better take hold of my arm, and I'll take you ſafe out.

LADY GOODBODY.

Do take me out! do take me out! Fire! fire! fire! is there nobody coming to us? *(Takes hold of* Will's *arm, who ſtaggers along with her firſt to one ſide of the ſtage, and then to the other.)* Why, what are you about, fellow? I'll get better along by myſelf.

WILL.

Never fear! never fear! I'll warrant I'll take care of your Ladyſhip.

LADY GOODBODY.

Why don't you go faſter then? Let go my arm, I ſay. Is the fellow mad or drunk?

WILL.

I'll take care of your Ladyſhip. Old ladies are often a ſtumbling: take good care of your feet, madam.

LADY GOODBODY.

Look to your own feet, fool! and let me alone. The man's diſtracted! let go my arm, I ſay. *(She ſtruggles to get free: he keeps faſt hold of her, and hobbles zig-zag over the ſtage, ſhe all the while calling*

out fire, till they get to the ſtaircaſe door, where he falls down with his body right acroſs the door to prevent its opening, as if he were in a fit.) Heaven preſerve us! the man's in a fit, and the door won't open. Who's there? Fire! fire! fire!

Enter LANDLADY *and* DOLLY.

LANDLADY.

Fire in my houſe, mercy on us! how ſtrong it ſmells here. O lud! lud! I'm a ruin'd woman! Where can it have broke out? O lud! lud!

DOLLY.

Lack-a-daiſy! I ſmell it over head. I'll pawn my life it is in the north garret, where my new gown lies. O dear! O dear!

LANDLADY *(running diſtractedly about).*

Fire! fire! Water! water! will nobody aſſiſt a poor ruined woman? Oh, all my good furniture! Oh, my new dimity bed!

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *in his night-gown.*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Confound your new dimity bed! Where is Miſs Martin?

LADY GOODBODY.

O my child! my child! where is my child?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I'll go for her.—But here ſhe comes: all's well now; let it burn as it will. *(Enter* MISS MARTIN, *and* Sir John *runs eagerly up to her, but ſtops ſhort ſuddenly.)* My old ſick fellow is in bed, and can't ſtir a limb to ſave himſelf; I muſt carry him out in my arms. *(Going haſtily out, but is ſtopped by* Amaryllis, *who enters groteſquely dreſſed in his nightcap.)*

AMARYLLIS.

Where are you going? where has it broke out?

LANDLADY.

O lud, ſir! it is broke out up ſtairs, and all my goods will be burnt. Who will aſſiſt a poor ruin'd woman?

AMARYLLIS.

There is no fire up ſtairs, I aſſure you, but I ſmell it here.

LANDLADY.

Then it is down ſtairs, and we ſhall all be burnt before we can get out. *(They all crowd about the ſtaircaſe door.)* Raiſe that great fellow there.

LADY GOODBODY.

He's in a ſtrong hyſterick fit.

DOLLY.

Give him a kick o' the guts, and that will cure his extericks.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

A haſty remedy, gentle maiden.

(Sir John *and* Amaryllis *lift* Will *neck and heels from the door.)*

Enter DAVID *from the ſtaircaſe.*

DAVID.

Who ſtopped the door there? what's all this buſtle for?

LANDLADY.

O, David, David! isn't there fire below ſtairs, David?

DAVID.

Yes, as much as will roaſt an egg, if you blow it well.

LANDLADY.

Nay, but I'm ſure the houſe is on fire, for I dreamt this very night that Pompey's whelp was gnawing a hole in my apron, and that bodes me no good. I'll go and look all over the houſe. Come, Doll. *(Exeunt* Landlady *and* Dolly.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(to* Amaryllis).

We had better ſearch too.

(Exeunt Sir John *and* Amaryllis.

DAVID.

What's the matter with Will?

LADY GOODBODY.

He's in a ſtrong fit.

DAVID.

I never knew him in one before: I'm afraid he's dead, poor fellow! What will become of old Grizel his mother now? He gave the beſt half of his earnings to keep her out of the workhouſe.

LADY GOODBODY.

Did he indeed! good young man! Run and get aſſiſtance for him. But, happen what will, old Grizel ſhan't go to the workhouſe, for I'll take care of her myſelf. Haſte, good David! run for the apothecary directly. (*Exit* David.) Go, Mary, fetch me ſome drops from my room. (*Exit* Miſs Martin.) Poor young man!

WILL (*getting up, and falling on his knees to* Lady Goodbody).

O, my good bleſſed lady! I'm a Jew, and a Turk, and a Judas Iſcariot. I have played the knave with you all this while out of ſpite. If I had not been a beaſt I might have known that you were a main good, charitable lady.—But I'll fetch her back again: I'll run to the world's end to ſerve you.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are raving, I fear: who will you fetch back?

WILL.

The great heireſs, your niece, madam, who is run off to marry Mr. Worſhipton, and all by my curſed contrivance too.

LADY GOODBODY.

The great heireſs, my niece!

WILL.

Yes, my lady; your niece, Miſs Clodpate: but I'll fetch her back again, tho' every bone in my ſkin ſhould be broken.

LADY GOODBODY.

This is ſtrange, indeed! *(Conſidering a while.)* No, no, young man, don't go after her: ſhe is of age, and may do as ſhe pleaſes.

WILL.

Ods my life, you are the beſt good lady alive! I'll run and tell my old mother what a lady you are.

LADY GOODBODY.

Nay, I'll go and ſee her myſelf; I may be able to make her ſituation more comfortable, perhaps.

WILL *(burſting into tears).*

Thank you, madam! Heaven knows I thank you! but as long as I have health and theſe two hands, I'll take care of her who took care of me before I could take care of myſelf.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are a good young man, I ſee, and I have a great mind to take care of you both. She has brought you ſoberly up, I hope, and taught you to read your Bible.

WILL.

O Lord, madam! old Grizel can't read a word herſelf, but many a time ſhe deſires me to be good —and ſo I will: hang me if I don't read the Bible from beginning to end, hard names and altogether!

LADY GOODBODY.

Come into the parlour with me: you muſt tell me more of this ſtory of Mr. Worſhipton and my niece.

Re-enter MISS MARTIN *with the drops.*

MISS MARTIN.

I ſought them every where, and thought I ſhould never ——

LADY GOODBODY.

We don't want them now; carry them back again. *(Exeunt* Lady Goodbody *and* Will *by one ſide, and* Miſs Martin *by the other.*

SCENE III. *The Inn Yard, with the ſtable-door in front, at which* Will *appears, as if ready to ſaddle a horſe.*

Enter AMARYLLIS.

AMARYLLIS.

I hear, Will, you are going by Lady Goodbody's orders to deſire the young couple to return to her from church: I ſhould be much obliged to you if you would take Dorothea behind you, for ſhe has got ſome buſineſs in the village this morning, and there is no conveyance for her unleſs you take her up.

WILL.

What, our Doll do you mean?

AMARYLLIS.

Yes, Will.

WILL.

Hang her! let her walk: Blackberry won't carry double.

AMARYLLIS.

I am ſure he will, if you try him.

WILL.

Why ſhould I hobble all the way with a fat wench behind me? She's able enough to walk.

AMARYLLIS.

Don't be ſo ill-natured now: ſhe would not be ſo to you if ſhe could ſerve you.

WILL.

No, to be ſure: as far as a kick o' the guts goes to cure one of the extericks, kindly chriſtian! ſhe will be ready enough with her ſervice.

AMARYLLIS.

Come, come! don't be ſo cruſty now. Here is money for you: Blackberry muſt carry double.

(Giving him money.)

WILL.

Ay, to be ſure, if I coax him well, I don't know but he may: for tho' he is but a brute he has as many odd humours about him as any reaſonable creature.

AMARYLLIS.

Do, my good fellow, and put a ſoft pillion under her, for the road is very rough.

WILL.

Nay, hang me if I do that! ſhe an't ſo delicate, good ſooth!—Let her be ready to ſet off in ten

minutes, if ſhe means to come, for I won't wait an inſtant for the firſt madam in England. A ſoft pillion for her truly! *(Grumbling as he goes into the ſtable.)*

AMARYLLIS *(alone.)*

He has been my rival, I ſee, by his ſpite. But no wonder! my charming girl muſt have many admirers. *(Exit.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Kitchen.* Landlady *discovered going up and down, busy with her family affairs, and* David *with two countrymen, drinking a pot of beer together.*

FIRST MAN *(drinking).*

My ſarvice to you, David.

DAVID *(drinking).*

And here's to your very good health, Maſter Simons. But as I was a ſaying, if I were 'Squire Haretop, d'ye ſee, I would look after mine own affairs, and not let myſelf be eaten up by a parcel of greedy ſpendthrifts and wandering newſmongers. I would look after mine own affairs, d'ye ſee, that is what I would.

SECOND MAN.

To be ſure, David, it would be all the better for him, if ſo be that he were in the humour to think ſo.

DAVID.

Ay, to be ſure it would, Maſter Gubbins. For this now is what I have always ſaid, and adviſed, and commented, and expounded to every body, that a man who don't look after his own affairs,

is, at the beſt, but a ſilly colt that ſtrews about his own fodder.

LANDLADY.

Lord help ye, David! would any one think to hear you talk, now, that you had been once the maſter of this inn, and all by neglecting of your own concerns are come to be the ſervant at laſt.

DAVID *(with great contempt)*.

Does the ſilly woman think, becauſe I did not mind every gill of gin, and pint of twopenny ſold in the houſe, that I could not have managed my own concerns in a higher line? If my parents had done by me as they ought to have done, Maſter Simons, and had let me follow out my learning, as I was inclined to do, there is no knowing what I might have been. Ods life! I might have been a clerk to the king, or mayhap an archbiſhop by this time.

(A knocking at the door, Landlady *opens it, and enter two Farmers.)*

FIRST FARMER.

Is Dolly within?

LANDLADY.

No, ſhe is gone a little way a-field this morning about ſome errands of her own.

SECOND FARMER.

That is a pity now, for we bring her ſuch rare news.

LANDLADY.

Lack-a-daiſy! what can that be?

SECOND FARMER.

Her uncle, the grazier, is dead at laſt; and tho' he would never allow her a penny in his lifetime, as you well know, he has died without a will, and every thing that he has comes to Dolly.

FIRST FARMER.

Ay, by my faith! as good ten thouſand pounds, when houſe and ſtock, and all is diſpoſed of, as any body would wiſh to have the handling of.

LANDLADY.

Ten thouſand pounds! how ſome people are born to be lucky! A poor woman like me may labour all her life long, and never make the twentieth part of it.

Enter SALLY.

Come hither, Sally: did Doll tell you where ſhe was going this morning?

SALLY.

No, but I can gueſs well enough; for ſhe is all

dreſs'd in white, and I know it is to Middleton church to be married to that there gentleman that writes all the ſongs and the metre.

LANDLADY.

'Tis lucky it's no worſe. Step into the parlour, ſirs, and I'll come to you preſently. (*Exeunt* Farmers *and* Sally *different ways.*) What luck ſome people have! married to a gentleman too! fortune makes a lady of her at once.

DAVID.

By my faith! and fortune has been in great want of ſtuff for that purpoſe when ſhe could light upon nothing better than Doll. They lack'd of fiſh to make a diſh that filled their pan with tadpoles.

LANDLADY.

Don't be ſo ſpiteful, now, David; ſome folks muſt be low in this world, and others muſt be high.

DAVID.

Yes, truly, ſhe'll be high enough. Give ſome folks an inch and they'll take an ell; let fortune make her a lady, and ſhe'll reckon herſelf a counteſs, I warrant ye.—Lord help us! I think I ſee her now, in all her ſtuff ſilks and her great bobbing top-knots, holding up her head as grand and as grave as a cat looking out of a window.—Foh! it were enough to make a body ſick.

LANDLADY.

Fy, David! you are as ſpiteful now as if ſomebody were taking ſomething out of your pocket: I'll aſſure you ſhe has a more genteeler behaviour than moſt young women in the pariſh: I have given her ſome leſſons myſelf.

DAVID.

Ay, by my faith! and her gentility ſmacks deviliſhly of the place that ſhe got it from.

Re-enter SALLY *in great haſte.*

SALLY.

Lack-a-daiſy! I went to the ſtable juſt now to tell Will about Dolly's great fortune; and he is gone, and Blackberry is gone, and the chaiſe and horſes are gone.

LANDLADY.

There is witchcraft about this houſe!—I'll pawn my life ſome of the gentlefolks are miſſing too; let us go and ſee. *(Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Enter* LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, *and* SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(ſpeaking as he enters.)*

I am heartily ſorry for it: my nephew alone is to blame, and he will be ſeverely puniſhed for his

fault.—You expect them to return when the ceremony is over: we ſhall ſee them ſoon then.

LADY GOODBODY.

I dare ſay we ſhall: and in the mean time let us drop this diſagreeable ſubject.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Forgive me, Lady Goodbody, for appearing to regret ſo much the honour of connecting my family with yours.

LADY GOODBODY.

Indeed, Sir John, I could have wiſhed to have received that honour from another party. Your nephew, however, ſets you a good example in marrying, tho' I'm afraid it will be loſt upon you.

MISS MARTIN *(fretfully)*.

Your Ladyſhip has teaſed Sir John ſo often upon this ſubject, that, if he has any ſpirit at all, he will certainly remain a bachelor from mere contradiction.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yes, Miſs Martin, that is a motive urged with authority by thoſe who recommend it from experience. Nay ſo greatly, it is ſaid, do young ladies delight in it, that every thing they do ought to be explained by the rule of oppoſition. When they

frown upon us it is a ſmile of invitation; when they avoid us it is a ſignal to ſtand upon the watch for a tete-a-tete; *(approaching her with an arch ſmile as ſhe draws herſelf up with an affected indifference.)* but when they toſs back their heads at our approach, in all the ſtudied careleſſneſs of contempt, we may conſider ourſelves as at the very pinnacle of favour. Is it allowable, madam, to take this rule for my guide?

MISS MARTIN.

By all means, Sir John; ſelf-love will naturally teach you to judge by that rule which proves moſt for your own advantage. I hope, however, you will allow thoſe unlucky men upon whom we beſtow our ſmiles, to find out another for themſelves.

LADY GOODBODY *(to* Miſs Martin, *diſpleaſed)*.

You have got a ſharp diſagreeable way of talking of late, which is not at all becoming, child: you uſed to ſmile and look good-humoured to every body.

MISS MARTIN.

And ſo I may again, madam, when I am with the poor ſilly folks who don't know how humiliating it is for them to be ſo treated: I hope I ſhall always be civil enough to ſpare Sir John Hazelwood that mortification. *(Making him an affected and ironical curteſy.)*

LADY GOODBODY *(peeviſhly)*.

Let us have no more of this!—Sir John, I ſhall now give up teaſing you about matrimony. I ſee you are incorrigible.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Then you ſee further than I do, madam, for I rather think it poſſible I may be perſuaded to enter into it at laſt.

LADY GOODBODY.

I'm ſure I moſt earneſtly wiſh it for your own ſake; and ſo confident am I of your making an excellent huſband, that I would even venture to recommend you to the deareſt relation I have.

MISS MARTIN *(aſide, breaking away from them ſuddenly, and hurrying to the other end of the room.)*

At it again! I can bear this no longer.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(to* Lady Goodbody.)

You ſee, madam, this converſation is intereſting only to you and me: had I not then better make love to your ladyſhip?

LADY GOODBODY.

Why there was a time, Sir John, when I was not without admirers.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

How much I ſhould have liked—but it would have been a dangerous gratification—to have ſeen theſe attractions in their full ſtrength which are ſtill ſo powerful in their decline.

LADY GOODBODY.

There is ſtill a good likeneſs of me, as I was in thoſe days, which Mary now wears upon her arm: whilſt I go to give ſome orders to my woman, make her pull off her glove and ſhew it to you. You'll have the ſight of a very pretty hand and arm by the bye; our family is remarkable for pretty hands. *(Exit.*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(going up to* Miſs Martin).

May I preſume, madam, thus authorized, to beg you will have the condeſcenſion to gratify me.

MISS MARTIN.

I can't poſſibly: It is not on my arm at preſent.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Nay, but I ſee the mark of it through your glove: may I preſume to aſſiſt you in pulling it off? *(Offering to take hold of her glove, whilſt ſhe puts away his hand with great diſpleaſure.)*

MISS MARTIN.

You preſume indeed: I can't ſuffer it to be pulled off.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Then I muſt indeed be preſumptuous, for poſitively I will ſee it. *(Taking hold of her hand, whilſt ſhe, ſtruggling to pull it away from him without effect, at laſt, in her diſtreſs, gives him with the other hand a good box on the ear, and then, burſting into tears, throws herſelf into the next chair, and covers her face with both her hands.)* My dear Miſs Martin forgive me! I fear I have behaved ungenerouſly to you: but believe me, careleſs as I may have appeared, I have beheld you with the moſt paſſionate admiration. *(Kneeling at her feet.)*

MISS MARTIN *(turning from him diſdainfully).*

Get up, Sir John, and find out ſome amuſement more becoming your underſtanding and your years.

(Walks to the bottom of the ſtage with aſſumed dignity, whilſt Sir John *ſits down much agitated on a chair on the front: ſhe, turning round, perceives his agitation, and forgetting her diſpleaſure, runs up to him eagerly.)*

MISS MARTIN.

Good heaven! is it poſſible that you are thus affected. What is it that diſturbs you ſo much?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

A very fooliſh diſtreſs, madam, but it will not long diſturb me.

MISS MARTIN.

I hope it will not.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Nay, it ſhall not, madam.—Firſt when I beheld you, I was weak enough to think that I diſcovered in an aſſemblage of features by no means (pardon me) particularly handſome, as many worthy and agreeable qualities as would have been unpardonable in the moſt ardent phyſiognomiſt. I ſaw thro' the weak deſigns of your aunt, and applauded your delicacy and ſpirit. I will confeſs, that paſſing by the door of your apartment the other night, as it ſtood open, I heard you mention me to your couſin in a way that completely enſnared me. I was fooliſh enough to believe I had at laſt found a woman in whoſe keeping I might entruſt my happineſs. But it was a weakneſs in me: I ſee my folly now; and this is the laſt time I ſhall be the ſport of vain capricious woman.

MISS MARTIN.

Is it poſſible!—Oh, we have both been deceived! I have been deceived by ſomething very far different from vanity—my wounded pride ſtill whiſpering to me that I was the object of your ridicule: and you have been deceived by a phyſiognomy that has indeed told you untruly when it ventured to promiſe any thing more from me than the ordinary good qualities and diſpoſition of my ſex.—

We have both been deceived; but let us part good friends: and when I am at any time inclined to be out of humour with myſelf, the recollection that I have been, even for a few deceitful moments, the object of your partiality, will be ſoothing to me.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(catching hold of her as ſhe goes away).*

No, madam, we muſt not part. *(Looking ſtedfaſtly and ſeriouſly in her face.)* Can you, Miſs Martin, for once lay aſide the filly forms of womanſhip, and anſwer me a plain queſtion upon which the happineſs of my life depends? Does your heart indeed bear me that true regard which would make you become the willing partner of my way thro' life, tho' I promiſe not that it ſhall be a flowery path, for my temper and habits are particular.

MISS MARTIN.

Indeed, Sir John, you addreſs me in ſo ſtrange a way, that I don't know what I ought to ſay.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Fye upon it! I expected a ſimple, I had almoſt ſaid a manly anſwer, from you now. *(Pauſes, expecting an anſwer from her, whilſt ſhe remains ſilent and embarraſſed.)* No, I ſee it is impoſſible: the woman works within you ſtill, and will not ſuffer you to be honeſt. Well, I'll try another method

with you. *(Taking her hand and graſping it firmly.)* If you do not withdraw from me this precious hand, I ſhall ſuppoſe you return me the anſwer I deſire, and retain it as my own for ever.

MISS MARTIN.

Why, you have hurt it ſo much in that fooliſh ſtruggle, that you have not left it power to withdraw itſelf.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Now, fye upon thee again! this is a ſilly and affected anſwer. But let it paſs: I find notwithſtanding all my particular notions upon theſe matters, I muſt e'en take thee as thou art with all thy faults. *(Kiſſing her hand devoutly.)*

MISS MARTIN.

I think I hear Worſhipton's voice.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Ah, my poor miſerable bridegroom of a nephew! I muſt be angry with him now, and I know not at preſent how to be angry.

Enter WORSHIPTON *and* HANNAH.

WORSHIPTON.

My dear uncle, I crave your bleſſing.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I think, ſir, it would become you better, in the firſt place, to crave my pardon.

WORSHIPTON.

The world makes great allowance, my good ſir, for young men of faſhion in my ſituation; knowing us to be of a free, careleſs, and liberal diſpoſition, it calls us not ſtrictly to account in matters of elopement.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

A liberal diſpoſition! No, ſir; more ſelfiſh than the miſer who hides his hoarded gold in the earth. I wiſh you had made what is really right, and not what the world thinks allowable, the rule of your conduct.

WORSHIPTON.

I ſhan't argue with you about conduct, Sir John; it is a deviliſh awkward word in a young fellow's mouth: but if you will do me the honour of viſiting me in town next winter, I ſhall introduce you to ſuch ſociety and amuſements as country gentlemen have not always the opportunity of knowing. You will, I doubt not, have more deference for the world when you are better acquainted with it.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are infinitely obliging, my moſt liberal ſir.—And ſo this is all the apology you mean to offer for deceiving a young girl, and making her the victim of your frivolous and fantaſtical wants?

WORSHIPTON.

No, no! I do mean to make an apology to the old lady.—Ha! ha! ha! tho' I can't help laughing when I think how I have cheated that wonderful piece of goodneſs and circumſpection. I muſt coax her a little to bring round the old fellow, my father-in-law, for I muſt have a brace of thouſands to begin with immediately.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yes, you are perfectly right to make as much of him as you can. (Sir John *leans thoughtfully againſt the ſide ſcene, and* Worſhipton *ſtruts conceitedly up and down, whilſt* Miſs Martin *and* Hannah *come forward from the bottom of the ſtage, engaged in converſation.)*

HANNAH *(in a buſy half-whiſper).*

So you ſee, My dear Mary, you muſt juſt tell my aunt that he ran away with me, and I could not help it. For, O la! he is ſo in love with me you can't think! And do you know we were married by ſuch a queer-looking man: he had fifteen holes in his caſſock, for I counted them all over the time of the ſervice. And do you know, when we came to the church door, Mr. Worſhipton had never a ring to put upon my finger. And do you know he borrowed an old ugly ſilver one of a woman who ſold ballads by the gate, and gave her half-a-guinea for it, tho' it is not worth a ſixpence. But

I'm juſt as good a married woman, you know, for all that, as if it had been gold. *(Holding up her finger with the ring upon it.)* An't I?

MISS MARTIN.

I believe it will make no great difference.

HANNAH.

I thought ſo.—Now do ſpeak to my aunt for me.

MISS MARTIN.

I certainly will, my dear Hannah, tho' you have played ſo ſly with us.

HANNAH.

But la! don't tell her about the half guinea for the ring, for that would make her angrier than all the reſt of it.—O lud! here ſhe comes: ſtand before me a little bit. *(Shrinking behind* Miſs Martin's *back.)*

Enter LADY GOODBODY.

LADY GOODBODY.

Well, Mr. Worſhipton, what have you done with my niece?

WORSHIPTON.

There ſhe is, madam. (Hannah *comes from behind backs, and makes* Lady Goodbody *an awkward frightened curteſy.)* We are both come to beg your

forgiveneſs, and I hope ſhe will not ſuffer in your ladyſhip's good opinion for the honour ſhe has conferred upon your humble ſervant.

LADY GOODBODY.

He muſt be a very humble ſervant indeed who derives any honour from her.

WORSHIPTON.

We hoped from the meſſage you were ſo obliging as to ſend us, that we ſhould not find you very ſevere.

LADY GOODBODY.

I think, however, I may be allowed to expreſs ſome diſpleaſure at not being conſulted in a matter ſo intereſting to my family, without being conſidered as very ſevere.

WORSHIPTON *(aſide to* Sir John.)

I only wonder ſhe is not more angry with me. *(Aloud to* Lady Goodbody.) I was afraid, madam, of finding you unfavourable to my wiſhes, and durſt not riſk my happineſs. But I hope you have no doubt of the honour of my intentions.

LADY GOODBODY.

Certainly; I cannot doubt of their being very honourable, and very diſintereſted alſo.—I have known men mean enough and ſelfiſh enough to poſſeſs themſelves by ſecret elopements of the for-

tunes of unwary girls, whilſt they have had nothing to give in return but indifference or contempt. Nay, I have heard of men ſo baſe as to take advantage of the weakneſs of a poor girl's intellects to accompliſh the ungenerous purpoſe. But it is impoſſible to aſcribe any but diſintereſted motives to you, Mr. Worſhipton, as Miſs Clodpate has but a very ſmall fortune.

WORSHIPTON *(ſtarting.)*

What do you mean, madam? the only child of your brother, Sir Rowland: you call'd her ſo yourſelf.

LADY GOODBODY.

I told you ſhe was the only child of my brother by his wife Sophia Elmot; but diſagreeable circumſtances ſometimes take place in the beſt families, which it goes againſt one's feelings to repeat; and there was no neceſſity for my telling you, in indifferent converſation, that he has married his own cook maid a year and a half ago, by whom he has two ſtout healthy boys.

(Worſhipton *ſtands like one petrified for ſome time, but perceiving a ſmile upon* Miſs Martin's *face, takes courage.)*

WORSHIPTON.

Come, come! this joke won't paſs upon me: I'm not ſo eaſily played upon.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

It is a joke I'm afraid that will not make you merry, Worſhipton.

WORSHIPTON.

I'll believe nobody but Hannah herſelf, for ſhe can't be in the plot, and ſhe is too ſimple to deceive me. *(To* Hannah.) Pray, my good girl, how many brothers have you got?

HANNAH.

La! only two; and one of them is called Rowland after my father, you know, and one of them little Johnny.

WORSHIPTON.

O, hang little Johnny, and the whole fools of the race! I am ruined beyond redemption.

(Pacing up and down, and toſſing about his arms in deſpair.)

HANNAH *(going up to him.)*

La! Mr. Worſhipton, what is the matter?

MISS MARTIN *(pulling her back.)*

Don't ſpeak to him now.

LADY GOODBODY *(going up to him ſoothingly).*

Don't be ſo much overcome, Mr. Worſhipton; things are not ſo very deſperate. Hannah will have

five thouſand pounds at her father's death: he allows her the intereſt of it in the meantime, and I ſhall add two hundred a year to it. This, joined to your pay may, I think, with prudence and economy, enable you to live together in a very ſnug comfortable way.

WORSHIPTON.

Damn your ſnug comfortable ways of living! my ſoul abhors the idea of it. I'll pack up all I have in a napſack firſt, and join the wild Indians in America.—I wiſh I had been in the bottomleſs ocean ere I had come to this accurſed place.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Have a little patience, Worſhipton, and hear my plan for you. I'll pay your debts; you ſhall have the ſame income you had before, with more prudence perhaps to manage it well; and your wife ſhall live with her friends in the country.

HANNAH.

No, but I'll live with mine own huſband, for he knows well enough he is mine own huſband.

(Taking hold of Worſhipton, *whilſt he ſhakes her off in diſguſt.)*

LADY GOODBODY.

How can you uſe your wife ſo, Mr. Worſhipton!

HANNAH *(whimpering.)*

Oh! he don't love me! Oh dear me! he don't love me a bit!

WORSHIPTON.

What is the creature whimpering for? I ſhall run diſtracted!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

For God ſake be more calm! If you'll promiſe to live prudently in town, we ſhall manage your lady in the country for you. But remember, Edward, the firſt time I hear of your old habits returning upon you, ſhe ſhall be ſent to London to pay you a viſit.

WORSHIPTON.

O dog that I am! and ſo this is all that I have made of my plots and my —— Idiot and fool that I am!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Conſider of it, Worſhipton, and conſider of it well.

WORSHIPTON.

I am diſtracted, and can conſider of nothing.

Enter AMARYLLIS, *followed by* DOLLY *and* LANDLADY.

AMARYLLIS.

I am come to pay my compliments to you, Wor-

ſhipton, with all poſſible good will; I wiſh you and your fair bride joy, moſt cordially.

WORSHIPTON.

Nay, I wiſh you joy, Amaryllis.

AMARYLLIS.

Ha! who has been ſo officious as to tell you of my marriage already?

WORSHIPTON.

Married!—No, faith; I gave you joy becauſe I thought you a bachelor ſtill. Married! what a dog you have made of yourſelf!—But no; your refined, your angelic Delia has favoured your wiſhes at laſt, and with ſuch a woman, you may indeed be a married man without being miſerable.

LANDLADY (*to* Worſhipton).

What did you ſay about Delia, ſir? he is married to our Doll.

AMARYLLIS (*fretfully to* Landlady).

Who deſired you to follow me here, ma'am?

LANDLADY.

It was your own wedded wife, ſir, that deſired me to come; and ſince you have choſen to marry the maid, I ſee no reaſon you have for to turn up your noſe at the miſtreſs. And you need not go for to

be aſhamed of her neither: ſhe is as clever a girl as ever whirled a mop, and as honeſt a girl too; and that is more than can be ſaid for many a one that carries her head higher.

WORSHIPTON *(burſting into a laugh)*.

Heaven and earth, Amaryllis! are you married to Mrs. Dolly?

AMARYLLIS.

Dorothea is a very good girl, Mr. Worſhipton.

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, yes! I ſee 'tis even ſo. Ha! ha! ha! *(laughing violently for a long time, till he is obliged to hold both his ſides.)* This is excellent! this is admirable! I thank thee Amaryllis! thou haſt been playing the fool as well as myſelf. Give me thy hand, man.—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(ſtepping forward, after having whiſpered ſome time behind backs with the* Landlady).

No, good nephew, moderate your laughter a little: Amaryllis has been playing the fool in a very different way from you; for he has married his bride without expecting one farthing with her, and learns on returning from church, as our good landlady has been informing me, that an uncle of hers

is juſt dead, who has left her a very handſome fortune.

(Worſhipton, *whoſe mirth ſtops in a moment, endeavours to reſume the laugh again, but finding it wont do, retires in confuſion to the bottom of the ſtage.)*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(to* Amaryllis *and* Dolly).

Much happineſs may you both have in your good fortune! With the woman of your choice and a competency, Amaryllis, you will be in the moſt favourable ſtate of all others for courting the muſes.

AMARYLLIS.

Yes, Sir John; with my own ſlender patrimony, and the fortune my wife brings to me, I hope to make my little cot no unfavoured haunt of the fair ſiſters. I am not the firſt poet who has been caught by the artleſs charms of a village maid; and my wife will have as much beauty in my eyes, dreſs'd in her ruſſet gown, as the ——

DOLLY.

But I won't wear a ruſſet gown tho': I have money of my own, and I'll buy me ſilk ones.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well ſaid, Mrs. Amaryllis! Gentle poet, your village maid is a woman of ſpirit.

AMARYLLIS.

She is untaught, to be ſure, and will ſometimes ſpeak unwittingly.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Never mind that, my good ſir; we ſhall have her taught. You ſhall make my houſe your home till your cot is ready for you, where I ſoon hope to have a lady who will take ſome pains to form your charming Dorothea for her preſent ſituation.

LADY GOODBODY.

So you are to have a lady then? If you had told me ſo before, I might have ſpared all my arguments upon this ſubject.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Indeed, madam, you might have ſpared them, tho' they were very good ones, I confeſs: the ſight of this lady *(taking* Miſs Martin's *hand)* made every other argument unneceſſary. I hope you will give me your bleſſing with her. I want but this, and will not enquire of you how many brothers ſhe has.

LADY GOODBODY.

So my Mary has caught you after all. Thank God for it! She is good enough for any man, and I would rather give her to you than to any other man in the world. As for her brothers, ſhe has but one, and he has increaſed inſtead of diminiſhing her fortune.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Talk no more of theſe things, I hate the very name of fortune at preſent.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pardon me; but I muſt tell you what my nephew Robert did: It may be good for another new-made nephew of mine to liſten to it. *(Glancing a look to* Worſhipton.) He and his ſiſter were left orphans without any proviſion: I bought him a commiſſion in the army; and with the addition of fifty pounds which I ſent him every year on his birth-day, as a godmother's gift, he contrived to live reſpectably without debt, and was eſteemed by his brother officers.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I know it well: a friend of mine had the pleaſure of knowing him abroad, where he ſerved with diſtinction and honour.

LADY GOODBODY.

Yes, he was afterwards ordered abroad with his regiment, where he had it in his power to acquire a little money with integrity; the beſt part of which (three thouſand pounds) he ſent home to his ſiſter immediately, that ſhe might no longer be dependent even upon me; and it ſhall be paid down to you, Sir John, upon her wedding-day.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No; God forbid that a country gentleman ſhould add to his ample income the well-earn'd pittance of a ſoldier! I will have nothing from the young hero

but the honour of being allied to him; and what advantage may accrue, by the bye, to my family, by ſetting ſo fair an example to ſuch members of it as may not have walked altogether in his footſteps.

WORSHIPTON.

Well, well, I underſtand you; but tell me no more of your good-boy ſtories at preſent: this croſs-fated day has taught me a powerful leſſon which makes every other ſuperfluous. *(Exeunt.*

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS;

OR

THE LAST OF THE CÆSARS:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS, *Emperor of the Greeks.*
MAHOMET, *the Turkiſh Sultan.*
OTHUS, *a learned Greek,*
RODRIGO, *a Genoeſe naval commander,*
JUSTINIANI, *a noble Genoeſe, and a ſoldier,*
} *Friends of* Conſtantine, *and belonging to his brave band of volunteers.*
PETRONIUS, } *Greeks, and ſecret agents of* Ma-
MARTHON, } homet.
OSMIR, *vizir to* Mahomet.
HEUGHO, *an old domeſtic officer of* Conſtantine's.
OTHORIC, *a rude but generous adventurer.*
Fortune-teller, Citizens, Attendants, &c.

WOMEN:

VALERIA, *wife of* Conſtantine.
ELLA, *daughter of* Petronius.
LUCIA, *a lady attendant on* Valeria.
Ladies and Attendants.

The Scene in Conſtantinople, *and in the camp of* Mahomet, *near the City.*

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A large platform on the roof of the palace of* Petronius, *from which are ſeen ſpires and towers, and the broken roofs of houſes, &c. with the general appearance of a ruined city, the diſtant parts involved in ſmoke.* Ella *is diſcovered with an attendant, ſtanding on a balcony belonging to a ſmall tower, riſing from the ſide of the platform. As the curtain draws up the ſound of artillery is heard.*

Enter OTHUS *and* MARTHON.

OTHUS.

Ah, ſee how ſadly chang'd the proſpect is
Since firſt from our high ſtation we beheld
This diſmal ſiege begin! 'Midſt level ruin,
Our city now ſhews but its batter'd towers,
Like the jagg'd bones of ſome huge animal,
Whoſe other parts the mould'ring hand of time
To duſt reſolves.

MARTHON *(coldly)*.

It does indeed ſome faint reſemblance hold
To what thou haſt compar'd it to.—How is't
Art thou not from the walls?

OTHUS.

No, not immediately.

MARTHON.

Wert thou not there when Mahomet's huge cannon
Open'd its brazen mouth and ſpoke to us?
How brook'd thine ears that deep tremendous ſound?
The coaſts of Aſia and th' Olympian heights,
Our land-begirded ſeas, and diſtant iſles,
Spoke back to him again, in his own voice,
A deep and ſurly anſwer; but our city,
This laſt imperial ſeat of Roman greatneſs:
This head of the world, this ſuperb ſucceſſor
Of the earth's miſtreſs, where ſo many Cæſars
In proud ſucceſſive lines have held their ſway,
What anſwer ſent ſhe back?

OTHUS.

Fye, hold thy tongue!
Methinks thou haſt a pleaſure in the thought.
This head o' the world—this ſuperb ſucceſſor
Of the earth's miſtreſs, as thou vainly ſpeak'ſt,
Stands midſt theſe ages as in the wide ocean
The laſt ſpar'd fragment of a ſpacious land

That in ſome grand and awful miniſtration
Of mighty nature has ingulphed been,
Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
O'er the wild waſte around, and ſadly frowns
In lonely majeſty. But ſhame upon it!
Her feeble, worthleſs, and degen'rate ſons ——

MARTHON.

Yes, what ſay'ſt thou of them? they alſo are
The fragments of a brave and mighty race,
Left on this lonely rock.

OTHUS.

No, blaſt them! on its frowning ſides they cluſter
Like ſilly ſea-fowl from their burrow'd holes,
Who, ſtaring ſenſeleſs on th' invaders toil,
Stretch out their worthleſs necks, and cry "caw! caw!"
O, Paleologus! how art thou left,
Thou and thy little band of valiant friends,
To ſet your manly boſoms 'gainſt the tide!
Ye are the laſt ſparks of a waſted pyre
Which ſoon ſhall be trode out.—
We are the laſt green bough of an old oak,
Blaſted and bare: the lovelier do ye ſeem
For its wan barrenneſs; but to its root
The axe is brought, and with it ye muſt fall.—
Ye are —— O God! it graſps my ſwelling throat
To think of what ye are.

MARTHON.

A brave band, truly: ——
But ſtill our gallant emp'ror and his friends,
Oppos'd to Mah'met and his num'rous hoſt
With all his warlike engines, are in truth
As if one toſs'd againſt the whirl'd-up ſands
Of their Arabian plains, one graſp of duſt.

OTHUS.

Yes, they are few in number, but they are
The eſſence and true ſpirit of their kind;
The ſoul of thouſands. A brave band they are,
Not levied by the power and wealth of ſtates;
And the beſt feelings of the human heart
Have been the agents of their princely chief,
Recruiting nobly. Virtuous Sympathy,
Who on the weaker and deſerted ſide
His ample, lib'ral front doth ever range;
Keen indignation, who, with clenched hand
And ſternly-flaſhing eye, ever beholds
The high o'erbearing creſt of proud oppreſſion;
And gen'rous Admiration, above all,
Of noble deeds, whoſe heav'n-enlighten'd ſmile,
And imitative motion, ever wake
With eager heart-throbs at the glorious ſight
Of manly daring, have unto their numbers
Some ſcore of dauntleſs ſpirits lately added;
Such as would ride upon the whirlwind's back,
If it might be, and with Heaven's ſpearmen cope.

With ſuch a band, methinks, all things are poſſible.

MARTHON *(ſmiling)*.

Why, thou ſoft man of peace,
Who in gay banquets ſpend'ſt thy giddy nights,
And o'er ſome ſculptur'd ſtone, or ancient lore,
Each idle morning waſt'ſt in the cool ſhade,
Thou ſpeakeſt with a bold and warlike voice!

OTHUS *(throwing back his cloak, and ſhewing under it a warlike garb, with the ſcarf and devices belonging to the imperial band)*.

Ay, and wear'ſt too a bold and warlike form.
Behold what now I am! thou ſhrinkeſt back,
And lookeſt ſtrangely on me: give thy lips
No friendly bleſſing to my new eſtate?

MARTHON.

Heaven bleſs the brave!

OTHUS.

Amen! but thou art cold. *(Sound of artillery is heard again.)*
O hear that ſound!
Doth it not ſtir thee as it thund'ring growls
Along the diſtant ſhore? *(Shaking his head.)*
It moves thee not.
Is that the ſound of female voices near us?

MARTHON.

Yes; ſee'ſt thou not on yon high balcony

That pale and fearful maid? her watchful ear
Is ever turn'd to ev'ry diſtant ſound.

OTHUS.

My gentle kinſwoman upon the watch!
I know for whom ſhe fears; nor do I marvel;
For ſhe was preſent on that crowded ſhore,
When Genoa's captain brought his gen'rous ſuccour,
And ſaw the brave contention of thoſe men,
In their proud veſſels bearing boldly on,
With wavy pennants floating on the wind,
Whoſe armed ſides, like a goodly bank,
Breaſted the onward tide of oppoſition.
(Speaking with a great deal of appropriate geſture.)
No wonder that her fancy has been mov'd!
Oh, it did ſtir the women on our walls—
The infants—yea, the very houſhold curs,
That from their kennels turn'd to look upon it!—
But for that motley crowd of moving things
Which we miſcall our men——Nay, by the light,
Thou too doſt hear me with a frozen eye!

Enter ELLA *haſtily from the balcony, and puts her hand eagerly upon the ſhoulder of* OTHUS, *who turns round ſurpriſed.*

ELLA.

What ſayeſt thou of him? where fights he now?
Or on the land, or on ſome floating fence?

OTHUS.

Of whom ſpeak'ſt thou, fair Ella?

ELLA.

Nay, nay! thou know'ſt right well. Did I not
ſee thee,
High as I ſtood, e'en now, toſſing thine arms,
And motioning thy tale with ſuch fit geſture
As image ſhips and ſails, and daring deeds?
Of whom ſpeak even the beggars in our ſtreets
When they ſuch action uſe? Thou know'ſt right
well,
Of Genoa's captain, and of none but he.
Did'ſt ſee him from the walls?

OTHUS *(ſmiling)*.

My little kinſwoman,
Thou lookeſt with a keen and martial eye
As thou doſt queſtion me: I ſaw him not;
I come not from the walls.

ELLA.

Didſt thou not talk of him as I deſcended?

OTHUS.

Yes, of that noble fight.—But doſt thou ſee
(Pointing to his dreſs.)
There are more warriors in the world, Ella,
Tho' men do talk of us, it muſt be granted,
With action more compos'd. Behold me now

The brave Rodrigo's comrade, and the friend
Of royal Conſtantine; who is in truth
The nobleſt beaſt o' the herd, and on the foe
Turns a bold front, whilſt with him boldly turn
A few brave antlers from a timid crowd,
That quakes and cowrs behind.

ELLA.

Yes, Othus, I did mark thy martial garb:
Heaven's angels bleſs thee!

OTHUS.

And earth's too, gentle Ella. *(Artillery heard again.)*

ELLA *(to* Othus, *ſtarting fearfully).*

O doſt thou ſmile and ſuch light words affect
Whilſt ruin growls ſo near us! hath ſad uſe
Made miſery and ſport, and death and merriment,
Familiar neighbours?—I'll into my chamber.

Enter PETRONIUS *and a diſguiſed* Turk.

PETRONIUS *(ſternly to* Ella).

Yes, to thy chamber go: thou liv'ſt methinks,
On the houſe-top, or watching in the towers.
I like it not; and maiden privacy
Becomes thy ſtate and years. *(To* Othus.) Ha! art thou Othus?
Thou'rt well accoutred, ſooth! I knew thee not.

MARTHON.

Yes, he is now a valiant ſoldier grown:
His Grecian lute, and pen, and books of grace
Are thrown aſide, and the ſoft letter'd ſage
Graſps a rude lance.

ELLA.

Nay, mock him not, for it is nobly done.

PETRONIUS *(ſternly to* Ella).

Art thou ſtill here? *(Exit* Ella *abaſhed and chidden.*
And now, my Lord, —— *(Turning to* Othus).

OTHUS *(angrily).*

And now, my Lord, good evening:
I too, belike, ſhall treſpaſs on your patience,
If longer I remain. *(Exit.*

PETRONIUS.

Well, let him go, it ſuits our purpoſe better.
But who could e'er have thought in warlike garb
To ſee him guis'd? He, too, become a fool!

MARTHON.

He thought, as well I gueſs, to move me alſo
His brave devoted brotherhood to join:
This was his errand here.

PETRONIUS.

I do believe it well: for Conſtantine,
With many fair and princely qualities
That in his clear morn no attention drew,
Now, on the brow of dark adverſity,
Hangs like a rainbow on a ſurly cloud,
And all men look to him. But what avails
This growing ſentiment of admiration
To our good means? Good Turk, where is thy gold?

TURK *(giving him a bag)*.

There, Chriſtian, whom I may not well call good.

PETRONIUS.

That as thou wilt: but Mahomet thy maſter
Shall find me ſtill his faithful agent here.
This very night, as I have promis'd to him,
The people ſhall in inſurrection riſe.
Clam'ring to have the city yielded up;
And if your narrow caution ſtint me not
In that which rules the ſtorm, it ſhall be rais'd
To the full pitch.

TURK.

And what is that, Petronius?

PETRONIUS.

More gold. Ay, by thy turban and thy beard!
There is a way to make our timid ſluggards

The Sultan's work within theſe walls perform
Better than armed men.

TURK.

And what is that, I pray?

PETRONIUS.

Why, more gold ſtill.——
I have in pay, beſides our mutinous rabble,
Who bawl, and prate, and murmur in our ſtreets,
Prophets, and conjurers, and viſion ſeers,
And wiſe men not a few, whoſe ſecret haunts
The timid flock to: many are the palms
That muſt be touch'd.—There are within our walls
Of idle, ſlothful citizens, enow,
If with their active maſter they ſhould join,
Still to defend them: therefore, be aſſur'd,
He who ſhall keep this fickle, wav'ring herd
From ſuch wiſe union, ſhall to Mah'met give
This Miſtreſs of the Eaſt.

TURK.

Fear not; thou ſhalt be ſatisfied.

PETRONIUS.

Right: let us now to work: 'tis near the time
When, from the walls returning with his friends,
The Emperor his ev'ning hour enjoys,
And puts off warlike cares: now let us forth,
And urge thoſe varlets on. (*To* Marthon.)
Do thou into the eaſtern quarter go,

And ſtir them up. Where is our truſty Gorbus?
The weſtern is his province. Send him hither:
We muſt ſome counſel hold: meantime within
I wait his coming. Be thou ſpeedy, Marthon.
(Exit Marthon.
Remember, friend. *(To the* Turk.)

TURK.

Thou ſhalt be ſatisfied.

PETRONIUS.

Good fortune ſmile upon us! *(Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A State Apartment in the Imperial Palace, with ſplendid ſideboards ſet forth, on which are ſeen cups and goblets, &c. as if prepared for a grand repaſt, and ſeveral domeſtics croſſing the ſtage, carrying different things in their hands.*

Enter HEUGHO, *followed by a Stranger and two inferior domeſtic Officers.*

HEUGHO *(after looking over every thing).*

Is naught omitted here? the rubied platters
And the imperial cup—I ſee them not.

FIRST OFFICER.

What boots it now, encompaſs'd thus with foes
And death and ruin grinning at our ſide,
To ſet forth all this ſumptuous garniture,

Which ſoon ſhall in a Turkiſh haram ſhine?
The Emp'ror heeds it not.

HEUGHO *(ſtamping with his foot).*

Dog, but I heed it!
And were the floating remnant of a wreck,
With the ſea bellowing round it, all that now
Remain'd of the eaſtern empire, I thereon,
Until the laſt wave waſh'd us from its ſide,
Would humbly offer to brave Conſtantine
The homage due to mine imperial lord.
Out on thee, paltry hind! go fetch them hither.

(Exit Officer.

STRANGER.

This is the hour, you ſay, when Conſtantine,
Like a tir'd woodman from his daily toil,
Unclaſps his girded breaſt; and with his friends
Enjoys his ſocial meal right cheerfully
For one ſo overſhadow'd with dark fate.
I am a ſtranger here, and, by your leave,
I fain would tarry ſtill to have one view
Of his moſt noble countenance.

HEUGHO.

Thou'rt welcome.
And, gentle ſtranger, thou wilt ſee a prince,
Who ably might have reign'd, had not his heart
To the ſoft ſhades of friendly intercourſe
Still turn'd, as to its true and native place.
A prince with loving friends, but lacking troops:

Rich in the dear good-will of gen'rous minds,
But poor in kingly allies. One thou'lt ſee,
Whoſe manly faculties, beſet with gifts
Of gentler grace, and ſoft domeſtic habits,
And kindlieſt feelings, have within him grown
Like a young foreſt-tree, beſet and 'tangled,
And almoſt hid with ſweet incumb'ring ſhrubs;
That, till the rude blaſt rends this cluſt'ring robe,
Its goodly hardy ſtem to the fair light
Diſcovers not. Hark! now they come:
(Flouriſh of trumpets.)
Stand thou ſecure, and ſee whate'er thou wilt.
(Calling to ſome people off the ſtage.)
Ho! you without! move there with more diſpatch.
(Several domeſtics again croſs the ſtage as before.)

STRANGER.

See, yonder come the brave imperial friends,
If right I gueſs. They bear a noble mien.
And who is he who foremoſt walks with ſteps
Of gravely-meaſur'd length, and heavy eyes
Fix'd on the ground? *(Pointing off the ſtage.)*

HEUGHO.

That is Juſtiniani; a brave ſoldier,
Who doth o' tiptoe walk, with jealous care,
Upon the very point and higheſt ridge
Of honour's path, demure and circumſpect,
Like niceſt maid, proud of her ſpotleſs fame;
A ſteady, cheerleſs friend.

STRANGER.

And who is he with open, lib'ral front,
Who follows next?

HEUGHO.

He is the brave Rodrigo;
That Genoeſe, who, with four gallant ſhips,
Did in the front of the whole Turkiſh fleet
So lately force his paſſage to our port,
Bearing us gen'rous and moſt needful ſuccour.
Does he not look like one, who in the fight
Would fiercely ſtrive, yet to the humbled foe
Give quarter pleaſantly?

STRANGER.

And who comes after with more poliſh'd aſpect,
But yet, methinks, keen and intelligent?

HEUGHO.

Oh, that is Othus; a ſoft letter'd ſage,
Who wears his ſoldier's garb with its firſt gloſs.

STRANGER.

Conſtantine comes not yet?

HEUGHO.

No; firſt of all to his imperial dame,
Who o'er his mind a greater influence has
Than may, perhaps, with graver wiſdom ſuit,

Being a dame of keen and lofty paſſions
Tho' with fair virtues grac'd, he ever pays
His dear devotions : he will join them ſhortly.
But ſoftly, here they are.

Enter JUSTINIANI, RODRIGO, OTHUS, *and many others of the Emperor's friends, armed as if returned from the walls.*

RODRIGO *(to* Juſtiniani).

Thou'rt ſternly grave : has aught in this day's fight
Befall'n, thy eager temper to diſturb ?

JUSTINIANI.

Your firſt directed fire ſhould, in good right,
Have been againſt that Turkiſh ſtandard ſent,
Rear'd in their front.

RODRIGO.

And ſhall we ſeriouſly expend our ſtrength
In paying worſhip to each Turkiſh rag
That waves before our walls ?
But frown not on me, friend : perhaps I'm wrong.
We who are bred upon a bark's rough ſide,
And midſt the rude contention of the waves,
Muſt force our ſteady purpoſe, as we may,
Right in the teeth of all oppoſing things,
Wreſtling with breakers on the ſcourged rock
Or tilting it with a ſeal's cub, good faith !
As it may chance, naught do we know of forms.

OTHUS.

Another time, valiant Juſtiniani,
With more reſpect to warlike ceremony
We will conduct ourſelves.
Rodrigo well hath pled his own excuſe;
And I, thou knoweſt, am but new in arms.

JUSTINIANI.

Methinks, ev'n to a child it had been plain
That, when ſo circumſtanced ——

OTHUS.

Huſh, huſh, I pray thee, now! the emp'ror comes:
This is his hour of cheerful relaxation,
Snatch'd from each circling day of buſy cares,
A faint gleam thrown acroſs a diſmal gloom,
Let us not dark it with our petty brawls.

Enter CONSTANTINE.

CONSTANTINE *(ſaluting them).*

A pleaſant meeting to us all, brave friends,
After our day of toil! There be amongſt us
Tir'd limbs that well have earn'd their hour of reſt;
This kindly-ſocial hour, this fleeting bliſs
Of the tir'd labourer. Undo our bracings,
And let us ſup as lightly as we may. *(Taking off his helmet, which he gives to an attendant.)*
This galls me ſtrangely:
Mine armourer, methinks, has better ſkill

To mar men's heads than ſave them.
Nay all of you, I pray. *(They all begin to take off their helmets, and part of their armour.)*
And gentle Othus too, unbrace thyſelf:
How likeſt thou the gripe of ſoldiers' geer?

OTHUS.

Worn in the cauſe for which I wear it now,
It feels like the cloſe hug of a rough friend,
Awkward but kindly.

CONSTANTINE.

Thanks, gen'rous Othus! it had pleas'd me better
To've had the gentle ſervice of thy pen.
Thou could'ſt have told, if ſo it might have been,
How brave men acted, and how brave men fell.—
Well, let it be. *(Turning aſide to check his emotion, and then aſſuming a cheerful face.)*
You gallant ſeamen, in th' applauding view
Of the throng'd beach, amidſt the tempeſt's rage,
Ev'n on the laſt plank of your ſever'd bark,
Ride it careeringly, my brave Rodrigo!

RODRIGO.

Yes, royal ſir; with brave true-hearted mates
All things we do and bear right cheerfully.

CONSTANTINE.

And ſo will we.—Your hand, my gallant friend!
And yours, and yours, and yours, my brave Eubedes—

And noble Carlos too—and all of you—
(Taking all their hands, one after another.)
I am indeed ſo mated.
Bring me a cooling cup, I pray, good Heugho,
My tongue is parch'd. (Heugho *preſents a cup to him kneeling.*
What, wilt thou ſtill upon thine aged limbs
Theſe cumb'rous forms impoſe? Theſe furly times
Suit not ſuch ceremony, worthy Heugho.

HEUGHO.

Be health and ſweet refreſhment in the draught,
My royal maſter!

CONSTANTINE *(taſting it).*

And ſo there is: few cups preſented thus
Come with ſuch kindneſs. But I have, in truth,
Shrunk, as a potentate, to ſuch ſmall graſp,
That now I fairly may put in my claim
To the affections of a man.—Brave friends.
Health to ye all! *(Drinks, then turning with a ſmile to* Juſtiniani.)
Juſtiniani, I with thee alone
Have cauſe of quarrel in this day's long toil.

JUSTINIANI.

How ſo, an' pleaſe your highneſs?
The holy hermit, counting o'er his beads,
Is not more ſcrupulous than I have been
Naught of his ſacred duty to omit,

CONSTANTINE.

Thou put'ſt a groſs affront upon the worth
Of all thy warlike deeds; for thou from them
Claim'ſt not the privilege to ſave thyſelf
From needleſs dangers. On the walls this day
Thou haſt expoſed thyſelf like a raw ſtripling,
Who is aſham'd to turn one ſtep aſide
When the firſt darts are whizzing paſt his ear.
Rodrigo there, beneath an aſs's pannier
Would ſave his head from the o'er-paſſing blow,
Then, like a lion iſſuing from his den,
Burſt from his ſhelter with redoubled ardour.
Pray thee put greater honour on thyſelf,
And I will thank thee for it.

JUSTINIANI.

I ſtand reproved.

CONSTANTINE.

I'm glad thou doſt.—Now to our ſocial rites!
No tir'd banditti in their nightly cave,
Whoſe goblets ſparkle to the ruddy gleam
Of blazing faggots, eat their jolly meal
With toils, and dangers, and uncertainty
Of what to-morrow brings, more keenly ſeaſon'd
Than we do ours.—Spare not, I pray thee, Heugho,
Thy gen'rous Tuſcan cup: I have good friends
Who prize its flavour much. *(As he turns to go with his friends to the bottom of the ſtage, where a curtain between the pillars being*

drawn up, diſcovers their repaſt ſet out, a Citizen *enters in haſte.)*

CITIZEN.

I crave to ſpeak unto the emperor.

CONSTANTINE.

What is thine errand?

CITIZEN.

My royal ſir, the city's in commotion:
From ev'ry ſtreet and alley, ragged varlets
In crowds pour forth, and threaten mighty things.
But one, whom I out-ran, comes on my ſteps
To bring a fuller tale.

CONSTANTINE *(to* Citizen).

Thou'rt ſure of this?

CITIZEN.

It is moſt certain.

CONSTANTINE *(to* Othus.)

What think'ſt thou, good Othus?

OTHUS.

I doubt it not: 'tis a degraded herd
That fills your walls. This proud imperial city
Has been in ages paſt the great high-way
Of nations driving their blind millions on
To death and carnage. Thro' her gates have paſt

Pale cowled monarchs and red-ſworded ſaints,
Voluptuaries foul, and hard-eyed followers
Of ſordid gain—yea all deteſted things.
She hath a common lake or ſludge-pool been,
In which each paſſing tide has left behind
Some noiſome ſediment. She is choak'd up
With mud and garbage to the very brim.
Her citizens within her would full quietly
A pagan's ſlaves become, would he but promiſe them
The ſure continuance of their ſlothful eaſe.
Some few reſtraints upon their wonted habits
And Mah'met's gold, no doubt, have rous'd the fools
To this unwonted ſtir.

CONSTANTINE.

It may be ſo: I ſhall wait further tidings.
Meantime, my friends, go ye, and as ye can,
Snatch a ſhort ſoldier's meal. *(They heſitate.)*
Nay, go I pray you!
I muſt not to my friends ſay "I command."
(They all go immediately, and without any order, ſtanding round the table, begin to eat.)
(To the Citizen, *remaining ſtill on the front of the ſtage.)*
And ſo thou ſay'ſt —— But lo! another meſſenger.

Enter another CITIZEN *in great haſte.*

SECOND CITIZEN.

The citizens in crowds—the men and women—

The very children too—mine eyes have ſeen it—
In crowds they come ——

CONSTANTINE.

Take breath, and tell thy tale
Diſtinctly. From what quarter comeſt thou?

SECOND CITIZEN.

I'm from the eaſt.

Enter THIRD CITIZEN.

THIRD CITIZEN.

I come to tell your highneſs that the city
Is in commotion; ev'n with fleſh-forks arm'd,
And all the implements of glutt'nous ſloth,
The people pour along in bawling crowds,
Calling out, "bread," and "Mah'met," and "ſurrender,"
Towards the royal palace.

CONSTANTINE.

And whence art thou?

THIRD CITIZEN.

I'm from the weſtern quarter.

CONSTANTINE.

Ha! ſpreads it then ſo wide? *(Calling to his friends at the bottom of the ſtage.)*

Friends, by your leave,
I ſomewhat muſt upon your goodneſs bear.
Give me my helmet and my ſword again:
This is no partial fray. *(Beginning to arm, whilſt all the reſt follow his example.)*

RODRIGO.

Well, let us joſtle with theſe ragged craft,
And ſee who grapples beſt. *(Buckling on his armour gayly.)*

JUSTINIANI.

A ſoldier ſcorns to draw his honour'd blade
On ſuch mean foes: we'll beat them off with ſticks.

OTHUS.

Words will, perhaps, our better weapons prove,
When us'd as brave men's arms ſhould ever be,
With ſkill and boldneſs. Swords ſmite ſingle foes,
But thouſands by a word are ſtruck at once.

(As they all gather round Conſtantine, *and are ready to follow him, enter* VALERIA *in great alarm, followed by* LUCIA, *and ſeveral ladies.)*

VALERIA *(to* Conſtantine).

O, haſt thou heard it?

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, my love, they've told me.

VALERIA.

From the high tower my ladies have deſcry'd
The dark ſpires redd'ning in their torches' light,
Whilſt, like the hoarſe waves of a diſtant ſea,
Their mingled voices ſwell as they approach.

CONSTANTINE.

It is a ſtorm that ſoon will be o'erblown:
I will oppoſe to them a fixed rock,
Which they may beat againſt but cannot ſhake.

VALERIA.

That is thyſelf.—O, no! thou ſhalt not go!
Yea, I am bold! misfortune mocks at ſtate,
And ſtrong affection ſcorns all reverence;
Therefore, before theſe lords, ev'n upon thee,
Thou eaſtern Cæſar, do I boldly lay
My woman's hand, and ſay, "thou ſhalt not go."

CONSTANTINE.

Thy woman's hand is ſtronger, ſweet Valeria,
Than warrior's iron graſp,
But yet it may not hold me. Strong affection
Makes thee moſt fearful where no danger is,
Shall eaſtern Cæſar, like a timid hind
Scar'd from his watch, conceal his cowering head?
And does an empire's dame require it of him?

VALERIA.

Away, away, with all thoſe pompous ſounds!
I know them not. I by thy ſide have ſhar'd
The public gaze, and the applauding ſhouts
Of bending crowds: but I have alſo ſhar'd
The hour of thy heart's ſorrow, ſtill and ſilent,
The hour of thy heart's joy. I have ſupported
Thine aching head, like the poor wand'rer's wife,
Who, on his ſeat of turf, beneath heaven's roof,
Reſts on his way.—The ſtorm beats fiercely on us:
Our nature ſuits not with theſe worldly times,
To it moſt adverſe. Fortune loves us not;
She hath for us no good: do we retain
Her fetters only? No, thou ſhalt not go!
(Twining her arms round him.)
By that which binds the peaſant and the prince,
The warrior and the ſlave, all that do bear
The form and nature of a man, I ſtay thee!
Thou ſhalt not go.

CONSTANTINE.

Would'ſt thou degrade me thus?

VALERIA.

Would'ſt thou unto my boſom give death's pang?
Thou lov'ſt me not.

CONSTANTINE *(with emotion, ſtretching out his hands to his friends, who ſtand at ſome diſtance).*
My friends, ye ſee how I am fetter'd here.

Ye who thus bravely to my fortunes cling
With generous love, leſs to redeem their fall
Than on my waning fate by noble deeds
To ſhed a parting ray of dignity:
Ye gen'rous and devoted; ſtill with you
I thought to ſhare all dangers: go ye now,
And to the current of this ſwelling tide
Set your brave breaſts alone. *(Waving them off with his hand, and then turning to her.)*
Now, wife, where would'ſt thou lead me?

VALERIA *(pointing with great energy to the friends who are turning as if to go out).*
There, there! O, there! thou haſt no other way.
(Bruſhing away her tears haſtily, and then aſſuming an air of dignity, ſhe takes Conſtantine *by the hand, and leading him acroſs the ſtage, preſents him to his friends.)*
Moſt valiant, honour'd men, receive your chief,
Worthy the graceful honours of your love,
And heaven's protecting angel go with you!
(Exeunt Conſtantine *and his friends, paying obeiſance to her as they retire, which ſhe returns with the profoundeſt reſpect, continuing to look after them till they are out of ſight; then returning to the front of the ſtage with a deep ſigh, remains for ſome time with her eyes fixed on the ground.)*

LUCIA.
My dear and royal miſtreſs, be not thus!
The people will their ſov'reign lord reſpect.

VALERIA.

Will they? Where is my little Georgian maid,
Whoſe grandſire, tho' a brave and ſov'reign prince,
Was piece-meal torn by a ferocious crowd?

LUCIA.

She told a wonderful ſurcharged tale,
Perhaps to move your pity: heed it not.

VALERIA.

Ah! whereunto do all theſe turmoils tend—
The wild contention of theſe fearful times?
Each day comes bearing on its weight of ills,
With a to-morrow ſhadow'd at its back
More fearful than itſelf.——A dark progreſſion—
And the dark end of all, what will it be?

LUCIA.

Let not ſuch gloomy thoughts your mind o'er-
caſt;
Our noble emperor has on his ſide
The dark and potent powers.

VALERIA.

What is thy meaning?

LUCIA.

A rarely-gifted man, come from afar,
Who ſees ſtrange viſions riſe before his ſight
Of things to come, hath ſolemnly pronounc'd it,

That Paleologus has on his ſide
The dark and potent powers.

VALERIA.

Alas! alas! are they the friends of virtue?
Who told thee this?

LUCIA.

One unto whom he told ſuch marv'llous things
As did all nat'ral knowledge far exceed.

VALERIA.

Thou doſt impreſs me with a ſtrange deſire,
As tho' it were upon my mind impreſs'd
By ſecret ſupernatural power. Methinks,
Were this dread night with all its dangers paſt,
I too would fain —— Ha! hark! what noiſe is that? *(Liſtening with great alarm.)*
Hark, hark! it is the ſound of many ſounds,
Mingled and terrible, tho' heard afar.

LUCIA.

Shall I aſcend the tower, and give you notice
Whate'er I ſee?

VALERIA *(eagerly)*.

I'll go myſelf. *(Exit in great alarm, followed by* Lucia *and ladies.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *An open Street before the imperial palace. A crowd of men, women, and children diſcovered, bearing in their hands torches, with clubs, ſticks, &c. and the ſtage entirely lighted by the red glare of their torches caſt up againſt the walls of the building. The confuſed noiſe and clamour of a great crowd is heard as the curtain draws up.*

FIRST CROWD.

HOLLA! let them come forth who trouble us,
And love they blood and beating they ſhall have it.

SECOND CROWD.

Surrender! bread and wine, and peaceful days!
Surrender, devils, or ye ſhall pay the coſt.

(All the Crowd call out clamorouſly, and brandiſh their torches, &c. in a threatening manner againſt the palace.)

THIRD CROWD.

Muſt we, men well inſtructed, rear'd, and cheriſh'd,
The chiefeſt of all townſmen of the earth;
We, whom all nations know and look upon

With envious worſhip — muſt we from our meals
And quiet couches, like your rude barbarians,
Be ſcar'd and rous'd with the continued bellowing
Of curſt artillery? it is a ſhame.

FIRST CROWD.

It is a crying, an inſulting ſhame.
Ev'n Mahomet regards our poliſh'd race
And rare acquirements; but for Conſtantine ——

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, ay! let him come forth with his baſe crew
Of ſavage ſtrangers; and ſhould they refuſe us,
Ev'n with good teeth and nails, fail other means,
We will do vultures' work upon them all.
(All of them calling out together, and brandiſhing their torches, &c. as before.)
Holla! holla! we ſay to you again;
Emperor! Conſtantine! come forth to us!
(A grand door of the palace opens, from which two flights of ſtairs deſcend into the ſtreet, and Conſtantine *with his friends appear coming out upon the landing place. The Crowd raiſe a great noiſe upon ſeeing him, and he ſtretches out his hand as if he wiſhed to ſpeak, but they ſtill continue loud and clamorous.)*

CONSTANTINE.

Audience, if that your ſov'reign may command it.

FOURTH CROWD.

Yes, let us hear what he will ſay to us.
(Several together.) There is no harm in that: peace all of you!

CONSTANTINE.

Behold me at your wiſh, aſſembled citizens:
Was it the voice of children or of foes
That call'd me forth?

THIRD CROWD.

Go to with mocking words! are we thy children?

CONSTANTINE.

Ye ſay, indeed, too truly! children do
Support, and honour, and obey their ſire:
They put their aiding hand to every burden
That preſſes on him: ever gather round him
When dark misfortune lowers; and, ſtrong in them,
He lifts his honour'd head amidſt the ſtorm,
Bleſſing and bleſs'd.
But I have ſtood in the dark paſs alone,
Facing its fierceſt onſet. In your homes,
Ye've ſtretch'd your eaſy limbs and fann'd your brows,
Whilſt I in parching toil have ſpent the day,
Aided by ſtrangers. Ye too truly ſay
"Are we thy children?"——When my ſky was clear,

Ye follow'd me with fond applauding love,
And bade God bleſs your fire; but when it lower'd,
Back to your homes ye ſhrunk, and gen'rous ſtrangers
Are by my ſide where children ſhould have ſtood.
(A confuſed murmur riſes amongſt them, and ſome call out.) He ſpeaks good reaſon, neighbours.
(Others call out.) Out on it! all fair words!
(Others.) Peace, ſirs! we'll hear him out.
(Others.) No! no! no! no! *(Brandiſhing their torches violently.)*
OTHORIC *(breaking through them with a great club in his hands).*
Peace, friends, I ſay! I am a ſtrong Hungarian,
And I will hear him out. *(The clamour ſubſides.)*

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, when the tempeſt lower'd ye ſhrunk away.
But if ſome gen'rous ſhame has mov'd you now—
If, thus aſſembled, with repentant zeal
Ye would return, behold theſe open'd arms!
O there be ſtill amongſt ye men ſufficient
To ſave your city, your domeſtic roofs,
Your wives, your children, all that good men love!
Were each one willing for a little term
To face but half the dangers which perforce
Not doing this, he ſtands expoſed to;
To bear but half the toils which I bear daily,
And ſhall bear lovingly.

FIRST CROWD.

Go to! ſurrender and have done with it.
Who thanks—who calls upon thee for thy toils?

CONSTANTINE.

That voice which, in the hour of trial, bids
The good man give his ſoft and ſenſitive frame
To death and torture, and ev'n fearful woman
Bend her fair neck unto th' uplifted ſtroke,
Calls upon me—yea, and I will obey it!

OTHORIC.

By the good ſaints he ſpeaks like a brave man.

FIRST CROWD.

Acts he like one? will he come down to us?
(Several ſpeaking together.) He does; he comes in truth!

(Conſtantine, *after ſpeaking in dumb ſhow to his friends, deſcends the ſtairs.)*

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, in good faith, he comes unarmed too!

CONSTANTINE.

No, citizens, unarm'd I am not come;
For ev'ry good man here ſome weapon wears
For my defence.

FOURTH CROWD.

Yes, he ſays well; and we'll defend him too.
(Several others.) And ſo we will; huzza! huzza!
huzza!
Long live brave Conſtantine, our noble Emperor!
(Many ſpeaking at once.) No, no! peace and ſurrender is our call! *(Raiſing loud cries, and brandiſhing their torches with violent threatening geſtures.)*

FOURTH CROWD.

Hear him out, fools, and he'll perhaps conſent
To hon'rable ſurrender.

CONSTANTINE *(to* Fourth Crowd, *and thoſe who range themſelves on his ſide).*

No, friends; if in this hope with me ye ſtand,
Turn to your place again; for whilſt I breathe,
With men enough in theſe encompaſs'd walls
To fire one gun, never ſhall Turkiſh banner
Upon our turrets wave. In this firm mind,
Upon thoſe walls I am content to die,
By foe-men ſlain, or, if heav'n wills it ſo,
Here on this ſpot, by thoſe I will not name,

OTHORIC.

No! we will die firſt, be it as it may,
Ere one hair of thy noble head ſhall fall!

CROWD *(on* Conſtantine's *ſide).*

Long live brave Conſtantine! brave Paleologus!
Huzza! huzza!

CROWD *(on the oppoſite ſide).*

No; bread, and peace, and Mahomet, ſay we!
(Both parties call out tumultuouſly, and threaten one another, and Rodrigo, Juſtiniani, *and* Othus *ruſh down amongſt them, leaving their other friends to guard the door of the palace.)*

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, thou ſea-lion! thou too needs muſt come
To growl upon us. *(To* Rodrigo.)

RODRIGO.

No, faith! I know you well: ye are at large
A ſet of ſoft, luxurious, timid ſlaves,
On whom a cat with muffled paws might mew,
And ye would turn from it.—But ſtill amongſt you,
I would upon it pledge my main and claws,
There are ſome honeſt ſouls who have ere now
Quaff'd their full bumpers to a brave man's health,
And I, in ſooth, am come, with their good leave,
To ſhake hands with them all. *(Holding out his hand invitingly to the oppoſite crowd.)*
Come; who loves valiant worth and Paleologus,
Give me his hand.

(Many of the crowd giving him their hands.) There is one for thee.

(Second.) Ay, and there. *(Third.)* And there.

RODRIGO *(to one who hesitates).*

And thou too, for thou wear'st upon thy brow
A soldier's look: I must perforce have thee.

(Casting up his hat in the air, and joined by all the crowd on his side.)

Long live brave Constantine! huzza!

(This they continue to do till the opposite party are dispirited and beat off the stage. Rodrigo *then presents his newly-acquired friends to* Constantine.)

CONSTANTINE.

I thank you all, my brave and zealous friends.
Within the palace walls I'll now conduct you,
And martial there my new-gain'd strengh, for which
I give heaven thanks.

(Exeunt Constantine, *followed by his friends, &c.* Rodrigo *walking last, and just about to go off the stage, when* Othoric *re-enters by the opposite side, and calls after him.)*

OTHORIC.

Hark ye! a word with ye, my noble captain.

RODRIGO *(returning).*

What would'st thou say?

OTHORIC.

Look on my face; my name is Othoric;
I'm ſtrong, thou ſee'ſt, and have a daring ſoul:
Look on my face; my name is Othoric:
Think'ſt thou thou ſhalt remember me, tho' thou
Should'ſt ne'er again behold me?

RODRIGO.

I ſhall, my friend: thou haſt a daring countenance.

OTHORIC.

My deeds ſhall not belie it. With this crowd
I came, a ſtranger of moſt deſp'rate fortune,
And hir'd by treach'rous men fell work to do.
But now, unhir'd, I'll do for your brave maſter
A deed that ſhall make Turkiſh ears to tingle,
And Chriſtian too, or fail it or ſucceed.

RODRIGO.

What wilt thou do?

OTHORIC.

The conſciouſneſs of what one arm performs
Let one heart keep.

RODRIGO.

Heaven aid and proſper then thy ſecret thought,
If it be good and honeſt! Fare thee well!

(Exeunt ſeverally.

SCENE II. *A ſmall narrow Street, before a private ſombre-looking houſe.*

Enter OTHUS *and* RODRIGO.

OTHUS.

Move ſlowly here, for now we paſs the fane
In which the myſtic viſion-ſeeing ſage
To ears of faith ſpeaks his wild oracles.

RODRIGO.

What, he of whom we've heard ſuch marv'llous things?

OTHUS.

Yes; ſuch perturbed times his harveſt prove,
When anxious minds, in dread of coming ill,
Would draw aſide, impatiently, the veil
Of dark futurity.—Softly, I pray:
A female form now iſſues from the door:
It moves, methinks, like Ella.

Enter ELLA *from the houſe with a female Attendant.*

RODRIGO *(eagerly).*

It is herſelf, and I will ſpeak to her.
Fair maid, as well I gueſs by that light trip,
Thy lover's fate hangs on a lucky thread;
Tough, and well whiten'd in a kindly ſun.

ELLA.

Well haſt thou gueſs'd: fortune is paſſing kind;
She leads thee, fights for thee, and guards thy head
From ev'ry foe-man's ſtroke.

RODRIGO.

Ay, but thy lover, Ella; was it not
Of him we ſpoke?

ELLA.

Fye, do not mock me thus!

OTHUS.

In truth he mocks thee, Ella, and no faith
To fates foretold or myſtic ſages gives.

RODRIGO.

Believe him not, ſweet maid. We ſeamen, truly,
Small dealings have with learn'd ſorcery;
Nor bead, nor book, nor ring, nor mutter'd rhymes,
Are for our turn: but on the ſea-rock's point,
In ſhape of hern, or gull, or carrion bird,
Our unfeed wizards ſit, and, with ſtretch'd throats,
Speak ſtrange myſterious things to wave-toſs'd men,
With many perils compaſs'd. Nay, ofttimes
The mermaid, ſeated on her coral ſtool,
Spreading her yellow hair to the ſunn'd breeze,
Will ſing a ſong of future fortunes fair
To him who has the luck to meet with her:
And ev'n the nightly winds will thro' our ſhrouds

Diſtinctive voices utter unto thoſe,
Who in their ſtorm-rock'd cradles lie and think
Of their far-diſtant homes.—I do believe
That all good fortune ſhall betide thy love,
Being thy love; for that doth far outdo
All other fortune; and beſides, no doubt,
A fair and courtly youth.

ELLA.

Go to! go to! thou mockeſt me again!
I love a brave man ——

RODRIGO.

And not paſſing fair,
Nor very courtly?

OTHUS.

No, nor wearing now
His youth's beſt bloom; but ſomewhat weather-beaten,
And ſunn'd on ſultry ſhores?

ELLA.

Fie on you both, you hold me in deriſion!
I'm young, and all unlearn'd, and well I know
Not paſſing ſage; but do I merit this?
(Turns to go away from them in tears.)

RODRIGO.

By heavens thou ſhalt not go! *(Catching hold of her hand to prevent her.)*

Thou ſweeteſt thing
That e'er did fix its lightly-fibred ſprays
To the rude rock, ah! would'ſt thou cling to me?
Rough and ſtorm-worn I am: but if thou lov'ſt me,—
Thou truly doſt, I will love thee again
With true and honeſt heart, tho' all unmeet
To be the mate of ſuch ſweet gentleneſs.

OTHUS.

I hear a noiſe of footſteps: we'll retire;
Let us purſue our way. *(Looking behind as they go off.*
'Tis one belonging to Valeria's train,
Who hither comes with quick and eager gait.
(Exeunt.

SCENE III. *A large ſombre room, with myſtical figures and ſtrange characters painted upon the walls, and lighted only by one lamp, burning upon a table near the front of the ſtage.*

Enter a CONJUROR *in a long looſe robe, and* PETRONIUS, *meeting him, by oppoſite ſides.*

PETRONIUS.

Well, my good ſage, how thrives thy myſtic trade?
Go all things proſperouſly?

CONJUROR.

As thou couldſt wiſh: to many a citizen

I have the fix'd decree of fate foretold,
Which to the ſultan gives this mighty city,
Making all oppoſition and defence
Vain; and their ſuperſtition works for us
Moſt powerfully.

PETRONIUS.

So far 'tis well; but be thou on thy guard;
I am expreſly come to caution thee.
Should any viſit thee, whom thou ſuſpecteſt
To be connected with th' imperial friends,
Be ſure thy viſions ſpeak to them of things
Pleaſant to loyal ears.

CONJUROR.

Fear not; I have already been forewarn'd,
And have ſuch caution follow'd.

PETRONIUS.

Thou haſt done wiſely: ſtill keep on thy guard,
And be not ev'n ſurpris'd if thou, ere long,
Should'ſt have a royal viſitor. My agents,
Who in th' imperial palace are on watch,
Have giv'n me notice that Valeria's mind
Is this way bent. If ſo, let thy deluſions
Still tempt her in the city to remain,
For herein is the ſultan much concern'd.
Huſh! we are interrupted.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT (*to* Conjuror).

A noble matron craves to ſpeak with thee.

CONJUROR.

Doſt thou not know her?

SERVANT.

No; in a black ſtole
She's cloſely veil'd; yet noble is her gait;
And her attendant underneath his cloak,
But ill conceal'd, wears an imperial creſt.

PETRONIUS *and* CONJUROR *(both together).*

Can it indeed be ſhe? *(Pauſing to conſider.)*

CONJUROR.

I'll venture it. *(to* Servant.) Go and conduct her hither. *(Exit* Servant.
It muſt be ſhe: I'll boldly venture it.

PETRONIUS.

Thou may'ſt with little riſk: meantime, remember
The caution I have given thee.

CONJUROR.

Truſt to my ſkill, and be a while withdrawn,
My noble patron. *(Exit* Petronius.

Enter VALERIA, *concealed under a long black ſtole, followed by* Lucia *and two female Attendants, who remain at the bottom of the ſtage whilſt ſhe comes forward.*

CONJUROR.

Approach, great dame.

VALERIA.

Yes, in misfortunes ſo;
That is my eminence: and unto thee
I come, an anxious ſuitor, if that truly
Th' unſeen myſterious powers with whom thou deal'ſt,
To human weal and woe alliance bear,
And may unto the care-rack'd mind foreſhew
The path of awful fate that lies before it.
I do beſeech thee! ——

CONJUROR.

Say thou doſt command;
For thro' that ſable ſtole, were it as thick
As midnight's curtain, ſtill I could behold
Thy keenly-glancing eye, and the dark arch
Of royal brows accuſtom'd to command.

VALERIA.

Ha! doſt thou ſee me?

CONJUROR.

Yea; and who is he,
Whoſe ſhadowy unreal form behind thee towers,
As link'd with thine tho' abſent? O'er his head
Th' imperial eagle ſoars, and in his hand
He graſps the emblem of ſupreme command.

VALERIA *(throwing back the ſtole with aſtoniſhment mixed with fear).*

O, moſt myſterious and wonderful!
Nothing is hid from thee: thou ſee'ſt afar
The diſtant death's day of the ſwathed babe,
Falling in hoary age, and the life's morn
Of thoſe who are not.—Here then all confeſs'd,
A wretched empreſs and a trembling wife,
I ſtand before thee. O let thy keen eye
Thro' the dark miſt that limits nature's ſight,
Follow that phantom o'er whoſe head doth ſoar
Th' imperal bird! for, be it good or ill,
His fate is mine, and in his fate alone
I ſeek to know it.

CONJUROR.

And haſt thou ſtrength to bear it? art thou firm?
For that which ſmites mine eye muſt ſmite thine ear.

VALERIA *(alarmed).*

Thou reck'neſt then to look on dreadful things?

CONJUROR.

I may or may not; but with mind not brac'd
In its full ſtrength, ſeek not thy fate to know.

VALERIA *(after a heſitating pauſe of great agitation).*

I can bear all things but the dread uncertainty
Of what I am to bear.

CONJUROR.

Then ſhall it be unto thee as thou wilt.

(After ſome myſterious motions and muttering to himſelf, he turns his face towards the bottom of the ſtage, as if he had his eye ſteadfaſtly fixed upon ſome diſtant point; and continues ſo for ſome time without moving, whilſt ſhe ſtands watching his countenance eagerly, with her face turned to the front of the ſtage.)

VALERIA *(impatiently, after a pauſe).*

O! what doſt thou behold?

CONJUROR.

Nay, nothing yet but the dark formleſs void.
Be patient and attend.——I ſee him now:
On the tower'd wall he ſtands: the dreadful battle
Roars round him. Thro' dark ſmoke, and ſheeted flames,
And ſhowers of hurtling darts, and hiſſing balls,
He ſtrides: beneath his ſword falls many a foe:
His dauntleſs breaſt to the full tide of battle
He nobly gives.—Still on thro' the dark ſtorm
Mine eye purſues him to his fate's high cope—

VALERIA.

His fate's high cope! merciful, awful heaven!
(After a pauſe.)
O, wherefore doſt thou pauſe? thine eyes roll terribly:

What doſt thou ſee? thou look'ſt on things moſt dreadful!
O look not thus, but ſay what thou doſt ſee!

CONJUROR.

I ſee a frowning chief, the creſcent's champion,
In bold defiance meet thy valiant lord.
The fight is fierce and bloody. ——

VALERIA.

Again thou pauſeſt yet more terribly.—
Haſt thou no utterance for what thou ſeeſt?
O God! O God! thou look'ſt upon his death!
(Claſping her hands violently.)
Doſt thou not ſpeak? wilt thou not anſwer me?
Thou look'ſt upon his death!

CONJUROR.

I look on nothing, for thy frantic terrors
Have broke the fabric of my air-ſhap'd viſion,
And all is blank.

VALERIA.

And will it not return to thee again?
O fix thine eyes, and to it bend thy ſoul
Intently, if it ſtill may riſe before thee,
For thou haſt made me frantic!

CONJUROR *(after a pauſe, and fixing his eyes as before.)*

The forms again return—

The champions meet: the fight is fierce and terrible:
The fateful ſtroke is given; and Conſtantine ——

VALERIA.

Merciful heaven!

CONJUROR.

And Conſtantine lays the proud creſcent low.

VALERIA *(pauſing for a moment as if to be aſſured that ſhe has heard right, and then holding up her hands in extaſy.)*

It is! it is! O words of bliſs!—Thou ſee'ſt it!
My Conſtantine lays the proud creſcent low!
Thou look'ſt upon it truly; and their forms
Before thee move, ev'n as the very forms
Of living men?

CONJUROR.

Even ſo.

VALERIA.

O bleſſed ſight!
It is not witch'ry's ſpell, but holy ſpirits
Sent from a gracious heav'n that ſhapes ſuch forms;
And be it lawleſs or unhallow'd deem'd,
Here will I kneel in humble gratitude.

CONJUROR *(preventing her from kneeling).*

No, no, this muſt not be: attend again:
There's more behind.

VALERIA.

Ha! ſay'ſt thou more behind?—Or good or evil?

CONJUROR.

Mixed I ween: 'tis ſtill in darkneſs ſhapp'd.

VALERIA.

In darkneſs let it reſt: I've heard enough.
I would not look upon thine eyes again,
And in my fancy ſhape thy unſeen ſights,
For all that e'er ——— Is that which lies behind
A far extended viſion? *(Pauſing anxiouſly.)*
Thou wilt not anſwer me—well, reſt it ſo.
But yet, O forward look for one ſhort year,
And ſay who then ſhall be this city's lord.

CONJUROR.

Thy huſband and thy lord, moſt mighty dame,
Shall at that period be this city's lord.

VALERIA.

Then I am ſatisfied. Thou haſt my thanks,
My very grateful thanks. There is thy recompenſe,
And this too added. *(Giving him a purſe, and then a ring from her hand.)*
We ſhall meet again
In happier days, when the proud creſcent's low,
And thou ſhalt have a princely recompenſe.
(Turning to her Attendants as ſhe goes away.)
Come, Lucia; come, my friends; the ſtorm will paſs,

And we ſhall ſmile in the fair light of heaven
In happier days. *(Exit, followed by her Attendants.*

CONJUROR *(looking at his reward).*

Good ſooth, this almoſt ſmites againſt my heart;
But goes ſhe not far happier than ſhe came?
Have I not earn'd it well?

Re-enter PETRONIUS.

PETRONIUS.

Thou haſt well earn'd it.
What! harbour ſuch poor ſcruples in a breaſt
So exerciſed in a trade like this?
Fye on't! But if thy conſcience is ſo nice,
Know that thou haſt in all good likelihood
Predicted truly; and her lord and huſband
Shall be ſtill, as thou ſay'ſt, this city's lord.

CONJUROR.

How ſo?

PETRONIUS.

Haſt thou not ſkill enough to gueſs?
Much has the ſultan of Valeria heard;
And, with the future beauties of his palace,
His fancy, in the moſt diſtinguiſh'd rank,
Already places her. Thou wilt ere long,
I can foretel by certain fleeting ſhapes
Which at this moment dance before mine eyes,
A favour'd, famous, courtly prophet be.

My little Ella too, taught by my art,
May play, perhaps her part; and ſo together
We'll amicably work.—May it not be?
Put up thy gold and ſay it is well earn'd.

CONJUROR.

It muſt be had, and therefore muſt be earn'd,
Falſely or honeſtly.—Does Conſtantine,
As ſpeaks this morning's rumour, ſend again
Another embaſſy to Mahomet
With terms of peace?

PETRONIUS.

He does, my friend: already in the palace
He, and his band of ſelf-devoted fools,
Deliberate on it. Thou, at no great riſk,
May'ſt propheſy the iſſue of their counſels.

CONJUROR.

I have adventured upon bolder gueſſing.

PETRONIUS.

Excepting that ſlight aid from Genoa,
Which by the maſter of a coaſting veſſel,
Kept ſecretly on watch, I am inform'd
Is now almoſt within ſight of the coaſt,
No hope remains to Conſtantine. And this
Shall not deceive him long; for I've diſpatch'd,
In a ſwift-ſailing ſkiff, a truſty agent,
Who ſhall with coſtly bribes and falſe reports
Deter their boldneſs from all deſp'rate efforts

To force a paſſage to the block'd-up port :
A thing, Rodrigo's bold ſucceſs alone
Hath taught us to believe e'en poſſible.

CONJUROR.

Thanks for your information, my good lord :
I'll profit by it.

PETRONIUS.

But uſe it prudently. And ſo good day.
Well thrive thy trade, and all good luck attend us.
(Exeunt ſeverally.

SCENE IV. *An apartment in the imperial palace, with a view through a grand arched door of another apartment, in which are diſcovered* Conſtantine, Othus, Juſtiniani, Rodrigo, *and others, ariſing from a council table. They enter and come forward.*

CONSTANTINE.

Well, my brave friends, I to your care intruſt
This laſt attempt by honourable treaty
To gain peace from the foe. Heav'n bleſs your efforts.

JUSTINIANI.

All that ſtrict honour will permit to us
Shall be moſt truly done, imperial lord,
And one ſtep farther on we cannot go.

CONSTANTINE.

Had I wiſh'd more than this, Juſtiniani,
I had ſent other miniſters. ——
Heav'n bleſs your efforts, brave ambaſſadors,
And make you wiſe as brave! If we ſucceed not,
As much I fear, it is my earneſt wiſh,
Ere the grand puſh that ſhall our fate decide,
To meet you all in bleſſed charity,
And join with you, perhaps, in the laſt rites
Of chriſtian worſhip that within our walls
Shall e'er be celebrated.

OTHUS.

Your wiſh ſhall be fulfill'd: we all deſire it.

CONSTANTINE.

I thank you. In an hour hence be prepar'd
To ſet out for the ſultan's camp. So, brothers,
Good day, and all good favour.

(Exeunt all but Conſtantine *and* Othus.

CONSTANTINE *(to* Othus *as he is about to go after the others).*

Wilt thou go alſo, Othus?

OTHUS.

Not if your highneſs does command my ſtay.

CONSTANTINE.

Ah, gentle friend! I do no more command!
But this diſtreſſes thee. Well, gen'rous man,
Thou art commanded. *(Pointing to a ſeat, and they both ſit.)*
Here, by thy friendly ſide,
I'll give my heart a little breathing ſpace;
For oh! the gen'rous love of theſe brave men,
Holding thus nobly to my ſinking fate,
Preſſes it ſorely.
From thee nor from myſelf can I conceal
The hopeleſs ſtate in which I am beſet.
No foreign prince a brother's hand extends
In this mine hour of need; no chriſtian ſtate
Sends forth its zealous armies to defend
This our begirded croſs: within our walls,
Tho' with th' addition of our later friends,
I cannot number ſoldiers ev'n ſufficient
To hold a petty town 'gainſt ſuch vaſt odds.
I needs muſt ſmile and wear a brow of hope,
But with thee, gentle Othus, I put off
All form and ſeeming; I am what I am,
A weak and heart-rent man.—Wilt thou forgive me?
For I in truth muſt weep.

OTHUS.

Yes, unreſtrained weep, thou valiant ſoul
With many a wave o'er-ridden! Thou ſtriv'ſt nobly

Where hearts of ſterner ſtuff perhaps had ſunk:
And o'er thy fall, if it be ſo decreed,
Good men will mourn, and brave men will ſhed tears,
Kindred to thoſe which now thou ſhed'ſt. Thy name
Shall in ſucceeding ages be remember'd
When thoſe of mighty monarchs are forgot.

CONSTANTINE.

Deceive me not; thy love deceiveth thee.
Men's actions to futurity appear
But as th' events to which they are conjoin'd
Do give them conſequence. A fallen ſtate,
In age and weakneſs fall'n, no hero hath;
For none remain behind unto whoſe pride
The cheriſh'd mem'ry of his acts pertains.
O no, good Othus, fame I look not for.
But to ſuſtain in heaven's all-ſeeing eye,
Before my fellow men, in mine own ſight,
With graceful virtue and becoming pride,
The dignity and honour of a man,
Thus ſtation'd as I am, I will do all
That man may do, and I will ſuffer all—
My heart within me cries, that man can ſuffer.
(Starting up with vehemence, and holding up both hands firmly clenched.)
Shall low-born men on ſcaffolds firmly tread,
For that their humble townſmen ſhould not bluſh,
And ſhall I ſhrink? No, by the living God!
I will not ſhrink, albeit I ſhed theſe tears.

OTHUS.

To be in toils and perils, nay in ſufferings,
With th' applauding ſympathy of men
Upon his ſide, is to the noble mind
A ſtate of happineſs beyond the bliſs
Of calm inglorious eaſe.

CONSTANTINE.

O no, good Othus! thou misjudgeſt of me.
I would, God knows, in a poor woodman's hut
Have ſpent my peaceful days, and ſhar'd my cruſt
With her who would have cheer'd me, rather far
Than on this throne; but, being what I am,
I'll be it nobly.

OTHUS.

Yes, thou wilt be it nobly, ſpirit as brave
As e'er wore Cæſar's name!

CONSTANTINE *(ſmiling ſorrowfully)*.

Yes, there is cauſe for me; there is good cauſe.
But for thoſe valiant men, link'd in my fate,
Who have in other lands their peaceful homes
And dear domeſtic ties, on whom no claim
Lays its ſtrong hold—alas! what cauſe have they?
What is their recompenſe? Fame is not mine;
And unto them —— O this doth preſs my heart!
A heart ſurcharg'd with many cares, and preſs'd—
With that beſides, which more than all—with that
Which I have wreſtled with—which I have ſtrove—

With that which comes between me and myſelf—
The ſelf that as a chriſtian and a man
I ſtrongly ſtrove to be ———

OTHUS.

You have before ſome ſecret cauſe of trouble
Hinted in broken words: will not your highneſs
Unto a faithful friend ——

CONSTANTINE *(turning away from him).*

No, no, good Othus!
Sometimes I dream like a diſtracted man
And nurſe dark fancies. Power and lawleſs will—
Defenceleſs beauty—Mahomet—Valeria—
Shape out of theſe wild words whate'er thou wilt,
For I can ſay no more.

OTHUS.

Alas, I know it all!

CONSTANTINE.

And yet why ſhould it thus diſturb my mind?
A thought, perhaps, that in no other breaſt
Hath any ſhelter found.—It is my weakneſs:
I am aſhamed of it.—I can look
On my ſhort-fated ſpan and its dark bound:
I can, God ſtrength'ning me, my earthly taſk
Cloſe as becomes a king; and, being clos'd,
To that which in this world's tumultuous ſtage
Shall happen after it, I am as nothing.

OTHUS.

Alas! my royal maſter, do not thus
To racking thoughts give away! is there not means
To free you from this pain, if you to uſe them
Have courage? Let the empreſs be convey'd
Far from theſe walls. It is a cruel remedy,
But it will give you peace.

CONSTANTINE.

I did attempt it, but ſhe has ſo cloſely
Entwin'd herſelf upon me—O, my friend,
It needs muſt paſs! I in th' unconſcious grave
Shall be at reſt.

OTHUS.

But does ſhe know the nature of your fears?

CONSTANTINE.

O no! ſhe does not! from that hateful ſubject,
As from a hideous ſerpent, ſtill with her
I've kept aloof.—Alas! what can I do?
I could as well into her noble heart
Thruſt the barb'd dart as tell her what I fear.

OTHUS.

Perhaps ſhe ſtill, as from the common horrors
Of a ſack'd town, may be conjur'd to flee.
And here ſhe comes; be it at leaſt attempted.

Enter VALERIA, LUCIA, *and attendant Ladies.*

VALERIA *(to* Conſtantine).

I come to claim thy promiſe: one ſhort hour,
A haſty ſunbeam thro' the cloud's dark ſkirt,
Thou giv'ſt to me, and I muſt claim my right.
Thy friends too, ere they go, ſhall be my gueſts:
I have brought powerful ſuitors to aſſiſt me.
(Pointing to her ladies.)
Ha! what diſturbs thee? how is this, my love?
Thy face is chang'd and troubl'd—What new
cauſe ——

CONSTANTINE.

O, no new cauſe! one that has much diſturb'd
me.

VALERIA.

And one to me unknown?

CONSTANTINE.

Speak to her, Othus!

OTHUS.

By many various ills and cares oppreſs'd,
Your royal lord is ſtill moſt cloſely touch'd
With that which does your weal regard. What fate
May, in a ſtorm-ta'en city, of dire fights
And horrid cruelties, have in reſerve,

If ſuch the city's doom, who can foreſee?
O, let him then his painful ſtation hold,
Gen'rous Valeria! from one care reliev'd,
His heavieſt care, the thought of leaving thee
The involv'd witneſs of ſuch horrid things!

VALERIA.

What would'ſt thou ſay in this? Think'ſt thou the ruin
In which he periſhes will have for me
Or form or circumſtances? It will be
Th' upbreaking craſh of all exiſting things,
That undiſtinguiſh'd is, and felt but once.
Othus, thou talk'ſt like an unſkilful ſage:
It was not thus thy maſter bade thee ſpeak.

CONSTANTINE.

Valeria, hard neceſſity compels us.
I have already ſafe aſylum ſought
For the laſt tender remnant of our race,
That ſomething might from this dire wreck be ſav'd,
And ſhall I not for thee ———

VALERIA.

No; I am nothing
But what I am for thee! When that is finiſh'd —

CONSTANTINE.

Ah, my Valeria, but that will not finiſh!
Thou ſtill may'ſt be for me—thou ſtill may'ſt bear

Honour'd memoral amongſt living men
Of him who was thy lord.—Good Lucia, aid me,
And gentle Servia too, and all of you!
(To the Ladies).
Cling round your miſtreſs with your ſoothing love,
And ſay that in a foreign land you'll be
The faithful friends and ſoothers of her woe,
Where ev'ry virtuous heart will bear to her
The kindred ties of holieſt ſympathy.
Say ye will be with her in kindlieſt zeal:
Ye will not leave her?

LUCIA *and the other Ladies.*

No, we'll never leave her!
(Gathering round her affectionately.)
Moſt dear and royal Miſtreſs, whilſt life holds,
In what'er land, in what'er ſtate you are,
We'll never leave you.

VALERIA.

I know it well: thanks to your gen'rous love!
But yet forebear, nor thus beſet me round.
(Putting them gently from her, and fixing her eyes upon Conſtantine.)
O, Paleologus! haſt thou for me
In fancy ſhap'd a world and an exiſtence
Where thou art not? *(Running to him and falling on his neck.)*
Here is my world, my life, my land of refuge,
And to no other will I ever flee.
Here ſtill is light and hope; turning from this,
All elſe is round me as a yawning tomb.

CONSTANTINE.

My deareſt love! my gen'rous honour'd love!
My ſweet Valeria! thou diſtracteſt me;
But have thy way, for I can urge no more.
Let dark fate come: I will abide its worſt.

VALERIA.

Nay, ſay not dark; there is a hope within me;
'Tis ſure, 'tis ſtrong, it cannot be deceitful.
(A ſignal heard from without.)
Hark! hark! a ſignal!
(Voices are heard calling without.) Ships are in
fight! ſupplies and warlike aid!

VALERIA *(holding up her hands).*

O bleſſed ſound! there is ſalvation in it.
Heaven ſends us aid! *(Voices again call out as before, and the ſignal is repeated.)*
Again the bleſſed ſound!
And here Rodrigo comes, wearing a face
Of welcome tidings.

Enter RODRIGO.

Succours, brave Rodrigo?

RODRIGO.

Yes, ſhips from Genoa are now in ſight,
Bearing, no doubt, brave aid, if to the port
They can make good their entrance.
(All except Conſtantine.) Good heaven be bleſs'd

CONSTANTINE.

And ſays Rodrigo "if"? *(Shaking his head.)*

VALERIA.

Nay, fear not, they will enter; with them comes
Another brave Rodrigo; thro' barr'd adamant,
Did it oppoſe them, they will force their way.

RODRIGO.

If they but have one jot of manhood in them,
They'll do all poſſible things.

VALERIA.

Ay, and all things are poſſible!

CONSTANTINE.

In truth, thou talk'ſt with ſuch exulting confidence,
Thou almoſt tempteſt me to graſp at hope.
(Voices call out as before, and a ſignal from the towers.)

VALERIA.

The animating ſound! Come, come! O, come!
And o'er the blue waves hail the bleſſed ſight.
(Runs out exultingly, every one following her with animated alacrity.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Turkiſh Camp: the tent of* Mahomet, *who is diſcovered ſitting alone in the eaſtern manner, with a great ſheet of parchment ſpread out before him, which he is conſidering attentively.*

MAHOMET *(after tracing ſome lines with a pen or pencil).*

Ho, Oſmir! art thou here?

Enter OSMIR.

Come hither, vizir; follow with thine eye
The various diſpoſitions of this plan
Which for our grand attack I here have traced.
God and the Prophet being on our ſide,
That mingled broil of fierce and dreadful fight
Which ſhall not ceaſe till from the liſt of nations
This eaſtern empire, with its long told line
Of paltry Cæſars, be expung'd and blank,
Shall not be long delay'd.

OSMIR.

All things muſt yield unto the towering ſpirit
And comprehenſive genius of your highneſs.
Permit your ſlave. *(Looking over the plan.)*
Conceiv'd, indeed, with deep and wond'rous ſkill!

But mighty lord, if that a worm may ſpeak,
Your van, methinks, is of a motly claſs,
The vile refuge and garbage of the camp;
Are muſſelmen led on in glory's path
By ſuch as theſe?

MAHOMET *(ſmiling fiercely).*

No; but brave muſſulmen o'er ſuch as theſe
May ſtep to glory's path. Garbage, I truſt,
Is good enough for filling ditches up.
Some thouſand carcaſes, living and dead,
Of thoſe who firſt ſhall glut the en'my's rage,
Puſh'd in, pell-mell, by thoſe who preſs behind,
Will rear for us a bridge to mount the breach
Where ableſt engineers had work'd in vain.

OSMIR.

This did eſcape my more contracted thoughts.
And here your highneſs ſtations Georgian troops:
Are they ſure men in ſuch important ſervice?

MAHOMET *(ſmiling again).*

Ay, ſure as death; here is my ſurety for them.
See'ſt thou what warriors in the rear are plac'd,
With each a cord and hatchet in his hand?
Thoſe grizly hangmen, in their canvas ſleeves,
Fight for me better than an armed band
Of chriſtian knights full cap-apée.—Look o'er it:
Something, perchance, may have eſcap'd my thoughts.

OSMIR *(after again examining it).*

No ; every thing is conſummately plann'd.—
But, mighty ſultan, this old officer,
Whom you have ſtation'd here with your new troops,
Is not to be relied on.

MAHOMET.

How ſo, Oſmir?

OSMIR.

It is ſuſpected that he has receiv'd
The en'my's gold ; one thing, at leaſt, is certain,
He has had private meetings with the foe.

MAHOMET.

What! art thou ſure of this?—Send for him quickly.
The fool midſt blocks and bowſtrings has ſo long
His baſe head tott'ring worn, he thinks, no doubt,
It needs muſt be his own. Send from him quickly,
And ſee that which is needful done upon him.
(Drawing the pen ſternly acroſs the name on the plan.)
There ; from the world of living things I blot him;
Another takes his place. *(Giving a paper to* Oſmir.)
Theſe are the uſual orders for the night ;
Aſſemble thou the ſev'ral officers,
And give to each his own partic'lar charge.

OSIMER.

Your ſlave obeys. *(Exit.*

MAHOMET *(alone, after muſing for a little while).*

Have I done well to give this hoary vet'ran,
Who has for thirty years fought in our wars,
To the death-cord unheard? *(Sternly, after pauſing a ſhort ſpace.)*
I have done well.
In my diſguiſed rounds, but two nights ſince,
Liſt'ning at his tent door, I heard him ſpeak
Words that methought approach'd to ſlight eſteem
Of my endowments and capacity.
Yes, he is guilty. *(After walking up and down ſeveral times he opens another ſcroll.)*
But I will fear no treaſon: here is that
On which I may rely. In mortal man
I have no truſt; they are all hollow ſlaves,
Who tremble and deteſt, and would betray.
But on the fates, and the dark ſecret powers,
So ſay thoſe ſure unerring calculations
Of deep aſtrology, I may depend. *(Sitting down again, and conſidering the ſcroll.)*
Ay, it muſt needs be ſo: this conſtellation
In cloſe conjuction with the warrior's ſtar,
Trac'd back in magic numbers three times three,
And nine times nine, and added three again,
Unto the hour of my nativity,
Makes it infallible. Here have I mark'd it

With mine own ſcience, num'ral, learn'd, and ſure.
Ha! ha! your fooliſh chriſtians now believe
Men's future fortunes are by wizards ſeen,
In airy forms pourtray'd, like mimick ſhows,
And truſt thereto with fond ſimplicity.
(Othoric, *who about the middle of this ſpeech has made his appearance from behind the curtain of the tent, diſguiſed like a Turk, but without a turban, now, ſtealing cloſe up to* Mahomet, *lifts up his dagger to ſtrike.)*
What do I hear?

OTHORIC.

It is thy fate, blind Turk, uncalculated.
(Striking.)

MAHOMET *(parrying the blow with his ſheathed ſcimitar, which he afterwards draws.)*
Ho! help without! treaſon and parricide!
Ho! guards without, I ſay? *(Guards ruſh in, and* Othoric *is ſeized, after defending himſelf deſperately.)*

MAHOMET.

(To Othoric.) Who art thou? What dark tyrant ſet thee on
To do this murderous and horrid deed?

OTHORIC.

And think'ſt thou ſuch deeds horrid?—But I came
To act and not to ſpeak.

MAHOMET.

Say rather, villain, to be acted on.
Do racks and burning iron pleaſe thee well
That thou ſhould'ſt earn them with ſuch deſp'rate pains.
(To the Guards.) Stretch out his arms, and let me look on them. *(Looking at his arms, and ſurveying him all over, he ſhrinks back as from a danger eſcaped, and then ſmiles grimly.)*
There will be tough work on thoſe ſinewy limbs
When they are dealt with.—Lead the traitor off.
I will give orders for his fate ere long.
(To Othoric, *who is about to ſpeak.)*
Thou ſhalt not ſpeak: I hate thy horrible face.
Lead him away? *(Exit* Othoric *and Guards, met by* Petronius *and* Marthon, *who enter as they are going out.)*

PETRONIUS.

What priſoner is this they lead along?

MAHOMET.

A dark aſſaſſin in my tent conceal'd,
Whoſe daring hand ev'n now aim'd at my life.

PETRONIUS *(caſting up his eyes to heaven).*

The life of great and godlike Mahomet!
It makes my blood turn cold.

MARTHON.

I too am ſtunn'd, and tremble at the thought.

MAHOMET.

Yes, all may tremble who in the dark purpoſe
Have part or knowledge had.

PETRONIUS *and* MARTHON *(both alarmed).*

What means my lord?

(Mahomet *walks ſeveral times acroſs the ſtage with angry ſtrides, whilſt they look fearfully upon one another, and then going ſternly up to them.)*

MAHOMET.

I know the baſe tranſactions of laſt night:
Ye ſtuff'd my gold into the dirty palms
Of thoſe who ſhook their torches in the air,
And cried long live brave Paleologus.
I know it all: think ye with upcaſt looks,
And mumm'ry ſuch as this, to blind mine eyes?

PERONIUS *(falling on his knees).*

As there's a God in heav'n, to you, great ſultan!
We have been true! (Marthon *kneels alſo.)*

MAHOMET.

Up, crouching ſlaves! when men ſo bred as you are
Thus lowly kneel, my very ſoul adhors them.

PETRONIUS.

Your death, great monarch, were to Paleologus
Triumph and ſafety, but to us ſwift ruin.

MARTHON.

And ſhall ſuſpicions ſo improbable
Fall upon us, who in your ſecret ſervice
Have dangers brav'd, and from your hands alone
Look for the recompenſe?

PETRONIUS.

If we laſt night have fail'd ———

MAHOMET *(ſtamping with his foot)*.

I will not hear you!

Enter OSMIR.

Oſmir, know'ſt thou this horrible attempt?

OSMIR.

I do great prince, and bleſs the Prophet's arm
That has preſerv'd you. What baſe enemy
Has arm'd the deſp'rate villain?

MAHOMET.

Petronius here and his ſmooth Grecian friend
Throw accuſation on the emperor.

OSMIR.

This moment in your camp there is arriv'd

An embaſſage of his moſt honour'd friends,
Sent by the emperor to treat of peace.

MAHOMET.

At this unlikely hour?

OSMIR.

Yes, time now preſſes, and, as I ſhould gueſs,
The hopes of ſuccour from thoſe friendly veſſels
That vainly have attempted through your fleets
To force a paſſage, raiſing ſhort-liv'd joy
Full ſoon extinguiſh'd, has to this late hour
Delay'd their coming.
Hope gone, they now are humbled ſuitors. Here,
Within your power, you have the chiefeſt men
Of the brave friends on whom he moſt depends;
This does not look like preconcerted plots
Of ſecret murder, at this very hour
To be attempted.

MAHOMET.

No, Oſmir, there is reaſon in thy words.

OSMIR.

But if your highneſs thinks it is expedient,
I will ſtraightway arreſt them.

MAHOMET *(after heſitating)*.

No; they are valiant men, and do as ſuch

Claim honour from a valiant foe. Go ſay,
That by the morning's dawn they ſhall have audience;
The open camp, with wide-mouth'd cannon cloth'd,
And all my lofty garniture of war,
Shall be my hall of ſtate. Secure thoſe men
Until my farther orders. *(Pointing to* Petronius *and* Marthon, *and exit, followed by* Oſmir. *Remain* Petronius *and* Marthon *guarded.)*

FIRST GUARD.

Come on, my maſters, we'll conduct you ſafely.

MARTHON *(to* Petronius).

Is it to plunge me in this dreadful gulf
That your curs'd leſſons have ſeduc'd my youth?

PETRONIUS.

Upbraid me not. I have not for myſelf
A better fate reſerv'd. But we are noble,
And of high lineage; fear not, for the ſultan
Will ſtill reſpect us.

SECOND GUARD.

Ay, ſo belike he will; your noble heads
May with the royal ſcimitar be chopt,
If he is much inclin'd to honour you.
Some men ere now, in other ſultans' days,
Have been ſo honour'd. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE II. *An open ſpace in the camp, with the Janizaries and Turkiſh troops drawn up in order. Cannon and warlike engines ſeen mixed with the tents. A flouriſh of trumpets; enter* MAHOMET, *with* OSMIR *and his train, and places himſelf in a chair of ſtate near the front of the ſtage. Another flouriſh of trumpets, and enter* OTHUS, JUSTINIANI, *and* RODRIGO, *with a ſmall train of Attendants, walking ſlowly up the ſtage.*

MAHOMET *(to* Oſmir, *as they come forward).*

Theſe men approach us with a hardy ſtep,
Nor wear the ſuppliant's humbled brow. Come they
To ſue or to command us? *(To* Othus *and the other deputies, who make obeiſance to him.)*
You are permitted to declare your errand.
If your hard-leſſon'd chief, more prudent grown,
Will now reſign his proud imperial city
Into the hands to whom high heaven's decree,
And power on earth reſiſtleſs, ſoon ſhall give it,
I will receive that which he cannot hold
With grace and favour.

OTHUS.

High heaven's decrees are known to mortal man
But in th' event fulfill'd; and for earth's power,
The cannon flanked cohorts, and wide front
Of far extended numbers, ſhew it not
To him, who in the ſmall and ſecret fortreſs,

E'en of one brave man's breaſt, more help diſcovers,
Oft in th' aſtounding hour of the ſtorm's pitch,
Than in an armed hoſt. Imperial Conſtantine
Will live or die within his city's walls
As may become their maſter.—Neverthelefs,
He will ſo far to hard neceſſity ———

MAHOMET.

I hear no more: your words are ineffectual,
And fall as powerleſs as the ruffian's ſword,
Whom now, within my tent, your royal maſter,
Compell'd no doubt by hard neceſſity,
Has hired to murder me.

JUSTINIANI *(ſtepping boldly forward).*

Sultan, thou ſitteſt where thou ſafely may'ſt
Say what thou wilt, therefore of all mankind
Thou moſt art bound to ſay but what is meet.
Put thoſe accuſing words that thou haſt utter'd
Into the mouth of any other Turk,
Wore he a giant's form, for in your camp
I know that ſuch there be, and I will prove it,
With this good ſoldier's arm, a curſed falſehood.

OTHUS *(to* Juſtiniani, *pulling him back).*

Thou art not wiſe.—Great ſultan hear me ſpeak.
If any baſe attack upon your life
Has been attempted, let the murd'rous villain,
If ſtill he breathes, be here before us brought.
In preſence of your highneſs we will queſtion him:

Perchance he will confeſs what ſecret foe
Has arm'd his daring hand.

MAHOMET *(after giving orders to a guard in dumb ſhow, who immediately goes out).*

Your ſuit is granted.
Theſe men ſpeak boldly, vizir. *(Aſide to* Oſmir.)

OSMIR *(aſide to* Mahomet).

They ſhrink not from the proof.

Enter OTHORIC *fettered and guarded.*

MAHOMET *(to* Othoric).

As thou may'ſt hope a mitigated doom,
I here command thee that thou truly anſwer
Whate'er thoſe Roman deputies demand.

OTHORIC.

I do not hope a mitigated doom,
And therefore, ſultan, cannot be commanded:
But if this brave man here will queſtion me,
(Pointing to Rodrigo.)
For in his preſence I do feel my ſpirit
To manhood's height brac'd up, I'll truly anſwer,
Tho' every word did in my ſinews fix
The burning pincer's tooth.

RODRIGO.

Ha! Othoric art thou not? the ſtrong Hungarian?

OTHORIC *(ſmiling)*.

Ay, thou remembereſt my name—I thank thee—
It pleaſes me to think thou'lt ne'er forget it.
Aſk what thou wilt, and I will anſwer thee;
Bid me do what thou wilt, and I will do it,
Barring the hind'rance of theſe chains.

RODRIGO.

Thanks to thee!
Then, whatſoe'er the ſultan aſks of thee,
Anſwer him truly. He will point his queſtions
Where his ſuſpicion points.

OTHORIC.

I will obey.

MAHOMET *(ſternly)*.

Who hired thee, thou bold and hard-brow'd villain,
Such horrid deed to do?

OTHORIC.

I have been twice hired, mighty Mahomet,
To do fell deeds, in which I've lack'd performance,

MAHOMET.

And who firſt hired thee?

OTHORIC.

Thyſelf.

MAHOMET.

Baſe traitor!
Dar'ſt thou belie me to my very face?

OTHORIC.

That I belie thee not be this my token;
My hire was given to me by Petronius,
Told from a ſable bag, on whoſe ſeal'd mouth
Thy ſcimitar and creſcent were impreſs'd.

OTHUS.

Petronius!

OTHORIC.

Yes, that ſmooth, ſubtle Greek.

MAHOMET.

He hir'd thee not to take the life of Conſtantine?

OTHORIC.

True; I was hir'd for waſteful inſurrection,
Not for delib'rate murder. Tho' moſt wretched,
A ſtranger, grip'd by hard neceſſity,
The price he gave me ne'er had bought this arm
To ſuch an act.

MAHOMET.

And who did hire thee for this ſecond deed,
Which thou muſt needs delib'rate murder call?

OTHORIC.

'Twas Conſtantine.

JUSTINIANI.

Thou lieſt, foul, artful villain!

MAHOMET.

Peace I command! ye ſhall not interrupt him.
'Twas Conſtantine that hir'd thee?

OTHORIC.

Yes, great ſultan!
But not with gold, and he himſelf, I ween,
Unconſcious of the act.

MAHOMET.

What did he bribe thee with?

OTHORIC.

With that which does but ſeldom prove the means
Of like corruption—gen'rous admiration
Of noble manly virtue. I beheld him,
Like a brave ſtag encompaſs'd by baſe curs,
And it did tempt me.—Other bribe than this
Have I had none; and to no mortal ear
Did I reveal my purpoſe.

(Mahomet *puts his hand on his forehead and ſeems diſturbed, whilſt the deputies hold up their hands exultingly.*)

RODRIGO *(to* Othoric).

O for a galley mann'd with ſuch as thou art,
Therewith to face a hundred armed ſhips,
Creatur'd with meaner life!
Yet thou muſt die, brave heart! yet thou muſt die.
Thou haſt done that which in no circumſtance
Man's hand may do, and therefore thou muſt periſh.
But I'll remember thee: thy name is Othoric:
I will remember thee.

OSMIR *(to* Mahomet, *who covers his face and ſeems diſturb'd, after a pauſe).*

Your highneſs gives no orders to your ſlave
Touching the priſoner.

MAHOMET *(uncovering his face angrily).*

His crime is plain: death be his inſtant doom.

OSMIR.

And in what mode? or ſimple or with pains?

MAHOMET.

Diſtract me not.

OTHORIC.

Vizir, be not ſo haſty.
I bear with me what will redeem my life,
And gain the ſultan's pardon.

OSMIR.

Ah! thinkeſt thou to gain him with that bribe
Which Conſtantine gave thee? *(Shaking his head.)*

OTHORIC.

No, not with that. I wear upon this arm
A potent band, with ſubtile magic wrought,
That, whereſoe'er 'tis on my body rubb'd
With mutter'd words which I alone do know,
Maketh the part firm and invulnerable
To ſword, or bullet, or the arrow's point—
To all offenſive things. Believe me not,
But ſee the proof.—Relieve mine arms, I pray,
That I may ſhew this wonder.

MAHOMET.

Unlock his fetters: if he tamper with us,
His tortures are enhanced.

OTHORIC *(to the guard who ſtands next him, after he has beem unfettered, and at the ſame time uncovering his left arm).*

Young Turk, thou wear'ſt a dagger by thy ſide:
To ſhew that I am made as other men,
Of fleſh and blood as ſoft and ſenſitive,
When with no charm ſecur'd, thruſt it, I pray thee,
Into this nerved fleſh. Nay, do not ſhrink,
For I ſhrink not.

MAHOMET.

Do it, thou timid ſlave!
(The guard ſlightly wounds Othoric's *arm with the point of the dagger.)*

OTHORIC.

You ſee it is an arm of fleſh and blood;
And ſo you'll find my body in all parts,
Thruſt where you will.—But mark me; where-ſoe'er
I rub this band, your weapens have no power.
(Opening his breaſt and rubbing it with a bracelet which he takes from his arm, at the ſame time muttering ſome myſtical words to himſelf.)
Now try if e'er the ſtouteſt arm amongſt you,
With pike, or ſpear, or keenly-temper'd blade,
Can pierce this charmed breaſt.

MAHOMET *(to an Attendant).*

Attempt it, brawny ſlave; thine arm is ſtrong.
(To Oſmir.) Give him a ſtronger weapon.—Now the proof! *(The ſlave receiving a ſword from* Oſmir, *runs with full force upon* Othoric, *who falls down, pierced through the breaſt, and utters a convulſive laugh as he expires.)*

RODRIGO *(exultingly).*

O, bravely done, thou ſpirit of true proof!

JUSTINIANI.

Yes, nobly has he ſhunn'd the degradation
Of ſlaviſh puniſhment.

OTHUS.

It was a lofty mind in a rude ſtate
Of wild diſtorted virtue; croſs the fancy
It ſtalks a gloomy, dark, gigantic ſhade,
Angel or fiend we know not.

MAHOMET *(aſide to himſelf turning gloomily away)*.

And Conſtantine is ſerv'd by men like theſe!

OTHUS *(to* Mahomet).

Seeing that of this crime our royal maſter
Doth clearly ſtand acquitted, by your word,
Moſt mighty Mahomet, we are permitted
To ſtate his wiſhes.

MAHOMET.

No, ambaſſadors;
I have already ſaid I hear no more
Unleſs ye yield the city.—Leave ye have
In ſafety to return.—You and your chief
O'er a volcano's thinly-bridged gulf
Have ta'en your ſtand, and the dire craſh is near.

OTHUS.

And with our chief in that tremendous ruin,
If it muſt be, we will ſink lovingly.

JUSTINIANI.

We will ſink honourably.

RODRIGO.

We will ſink glorioufly. Ay, by heaven's light,
And cheerly too, great ſultan! *(Paſſing the body of* Othoric *as they turn to go away.)*
Thou noble wreck, thou wert rigg'd gallantly!
(Exeunt Othus, Juſtiniani, Rodrigo, *and their attendants.)*

MAHOMET *(coming forward to the front of the ſtage, and ſtanding for ſome time in a thoughtful poſture much diſturbed.)*
And Conſtantine is ſerv'd by men like theſe!

OSMIR *(to ſlaves, pointing to the body of* Othoric).
Take up the carcaſe of that ſavage ruffian,
And ſtick it on a ſtake for vulture's food.

MAHOMET *(turning round angrily).*
No, reptiles! let it have a ſoldier's grave.

OSMIR.

This is exceeding mercy; ne'ertheleſs,
Your orders, mighty prince, ſhall be obey'd
By thoſe who are as duſt beneath your feet.

MAHOMET.

Yes, I do know that I ſhall be obey'd.

By thoſe who are——I am begirt with ſlaves.
(Turning away, and ſtamping on the ground as he walks.)
Mine enemy is ſerv'd by men like theſe!
I will give orders with all preſſing ſpeed
That now my grand attack forthwith be made:
What next may be attempted by ſuch foes
Who may divine.

OSMIR.

That is the ſafeſt counſel.
(Exeunt Mahomet, *toſſing his arms and muttering as he goes out.)*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

An out-poſt belonging to the Turkiſh camp, with a view of the city of Conſtantinople on the back ground, ſeen in the dimneſs of cloudy moonlight.

Enter ſeveral Turkiſh Soldiers by different ways, meeting one another.

FIRST TURK.

Ho! who are ye? our friends?

SECOND TURK.

I know thy voice.

FIRST TURK.

Yes, we are friends; but let us ſeparate,
And gain our tents as quickly as we may:
For now thro' all the camp the buſy ſtir
Of warlike preparation is begun;
And ere the morning dawn, each armed Turk
Muſt hold him ready for th' approaching day
Of havock, blood, and ſpoil. Come, let us on!

THIRD TURK.

Yes; but, good comrades, do once more look back,

And ſee, thro' the wan night, thoſe buildings gleam
With the laſt Chriſtian fires that e'er ſhall burn
Within thoſe circling walls.

SECOND TURK.

Ay, there the Prophet has prepar'd our reſt.
There ſoon, midſt heap'd-up ſpoils, and the wild wailings
Of fetter'd beauty, in our new-won homes,
We'll caſt our reeking ſcimitars aſide,
And lay us down in ſoft and lordly ſloth.
Comrades, it is an animating ſight.
But quickly let us gain our tents.—Huſh! huſh!
What Turk comes prowling this way, and alone?
It looks like Mahomet.

FIRST TURK.

It is the ſultan on his nightly rounds,
Diſguis'd; let us avoid him.

THIRD TURK.

I'd rather croſs a tiger on my way;
For, as the humour hits, it may be fatal
To know or not to know him. At the beſt
We ſhall be deem'd but lawleſs ſtragglers here:
Let us all ſeparate and gain our tents.

(Exeunt haſtily, all different ways.)

Enter MAHOMET *diſguiſed, followed at a diſtance by the Vizir.*

MAHOMET *(alone, after walking thoughtfully from the bottom of the ſtage, whilſt* Oſmir *remains on the back ground).*

What boots this reſtleſs wiſh? 'tis all blank ſilence
On that for which my greedy ears ſtill watch.
There's ne'er a Turk, who, o'er his ev'ning pipe,
Will not far rather talk of daring feats
By petty robbers done, than all the fame
And grand achievements of his ſov'reign lord.
'Tis cheerleſs ſilence all! Dull, ſtupid race!
They arm them for to-morrow's fight, 'tis true,
With much alacrity, and talk of conqueſt,
Carnage, and ſpoils; but for their ſultan's name,
The name of Mahomet, thro' all the camp
I've ſcarcely heard its ſound. Nay, once I heard it
In accents harſh pronounc'd, but as to liſten
I nearer drew, my ſteps the ſpeaker ſcar'd,
And all was into fearful ſilence huſh'd.
Their ſultan's name!—Peſt ſeize the ſtupid ſlaves!
O, Conſtantine! it is not thus thy ſoldiers
Do arm themſelves for thee.
Ho, Oſmir! art thou near me?

OSMIR *(advancing).*

Yes, my lord.

MAHOMET.

Haſt thou been liſt'ning too?

OSMIR.

Yes, ſultan; and I find your Muſſulmen
Their arms preparing for to-morrow's battle,
Beneath your royal ſtandard moſt determin'd
To conquer or to die.
They under your approving eye will fight,
As in the ſunſhine of propitious heaven.

MAHOMET.

Yes, I am in their minds full truly grown
A thing of gen'ral attributes compos'd—
A heaven of ſunſhine or of lowering ſtorms:
But as a man and leader, in whom live
The mental and corporeal qualities
Of Mahomet —— Peſt ſeize the ſtupid ſlaves!

Enter PETRONIUS *and* MARTHON, *muffled up in cloaks.*

But who comes here? twice on my rounds already
Thoſe men have croſs'd me: am I known to them?
By the great Prophet they ſhall bear their ſecret
Where ſecrets are ſecure!—Ho! ſtop ſlaves there!
Stop, in the ſultan's name! *(Running upon them furiouſly, and lifting his ſcimitar over the head of* Petronius, *who immediately diſcovers himſelf.)*

PETRONIUS *(diſcovering himſelf).*

Cruſh not a worm, my lord.

MAHOMET.

A worm indeed! What treaſon brings ye here,

Sculking, thus muffled up in dark diſguiſe?
Have I not warn'd ye both that ye do live
Beneath mine iron power in ſtricteſt faultleſſneſs?
For that when ye are found but to tranſgreſs
The galling limits of impoſed duty
Even a hair's breadth, there abideth you
A recompence more dreadful than torn ſlaves,
Writhing in horrid ecſtaſy, e'er knew.
Beware: ye have no power to ſerve me now,
And unſucceſsful traitors are moſt hateful.

PETRONIUS.

It is, great Mahomet, to make amends
For unſucceſsful ſervices, that here
Thou find'ſt us, on our way within the city
To gain for thee ſome uſeful information
Againſt to-morrow's puſh. Still in our power
Some little aid remains.

MAHOMET.

If thou ſay'ſt true, return to me again,
Leading thy beauteous daughter in thy hand,
Ere two hours paſs, who ſhall within my tent
A pledge remain for thy ſuſpicious faith
Until the city's ta'en.—Begone, I charge you,
And anſwer not again. (*Exeunt* Petronius *and* Marthon.
Are all mine orders iſſued for the morrow?
To each reſpective officer aſſign'd
His taſk and ſtation? and my rearward troops,
Mine axe and cord-men, they are not forgotten?

OSMIR.

No, pleaſe your highneſs, nothing is forgotten.
And by the early dawn —— *(A mixture of confuſed diſtant ſounds heard from the city.)*

MAHOMET.

What ſounds are theſe?

OSMIR.

Haſt thou forgot we are ſo near the city?
It is the murm'ring night-ſounds of her ſtreets,
Which the ſoft breeze wafts to thine ear, thus ſoftly
Mix'd with the chafings of the diſtant waves.

MAHOMET *(eagerly)*.

And let me liſten too! I love the ſound!
Like the laſt whiſpers of a dying enemy
It comes to my pleas'd ear. *(Liſtening.)*
Spent art thou, proud imperial queen of nations,
And thy laſt accents are upon the wind.
Thou haſt but one voice more to utter; one
Loud, frantic, terrible, and then art thou
Amongſt the nations heard no more. Liſt! liſt!
I like it well! the lion hears afar
Th' approaching prey, and ſhakes his briſtling mane,
And laſhes with his tail his tawny ſides,
And ſo hear I this city's nightly ſound.

OSMIR.

It is indeed a rich and noble conqueſt
Which heaven unto its favour'd warrior gives.

MAHOMET.

Yes, Oſmir; I ſhall wear a conqu'ror's name,
And other ages ſhall of Mah'met ſpeak,
When theſe dumb ſlaves are crumbling in the duſt.
But now the night wears on, and with the dawn
Muſt the grand work begin.
Yet one thing ſtill remains; I muſt remind thee
That to my gen'ral orders this be added:—
Silent ſhall be the march: nor drum, nor trump,
Nor claſh of arms, ſhall to the watchful foe
Our near approach betray: ſilent and ſoft,
As the pard's velvet foot on Libya's ſands,
Slow ſtealing with crouch'd ſhoulders on her prey.

OSMIR.

I have already given the ſtricteſt orders.

MAHOMET.

Then all is well: go where thy duty calls.
In the mean while I'll ſnatch an hour of reſt,
And dream, perhaps, that lovely Grecian dames,
Even with a crowned beauty in their band,
Are lowly bent to kiſs my purple feet.
(A diſtant bell heard from the city.)
What deep and diſtant bell is this which ſounds
So ſolemnly on the ſtill air of night?

OSMIR.

It comes from St. Sophia's lofty dome,
Where Conſtantine, with his ſmall band of friends,

As I have learnt, ſhould at this hour aſſemble,
To join together in religious rites
Of ſolemn preparation for to-morrow,
Which they regard as their laſt day of life,
And this as their laſt act of ſocial brotherhood.

MAHOMET.

Brave men! do they ſo meet? *(Pauſing.)*
But it muſt be.
Why ſhould it move me? Heaven decrees their doom:
I act by high commiſſion, tho' for inſtruments
I have but theſe dumb ſlaves. *(Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A pillared aiſle or open ſpace in the church of St. Sophia, with other parts of the church ſeen in perſpective. The great bell heard.*

Enter HEUGHO, *met by an inferior Prieſt.*

PRIEST.

Thou com'ſt before thy maſter and his friends:
How far are they behind?

HEUGHO.

Not many paces. *(Bell ſounds again.)*

PRIEST.

Werefore did'ſt thou ſtart?

HEUGHO.

It ſmote mine ear moſt ſtrange and dolefully.
Is there ſoul in its ſound which ſadly ſays,
It is the laſt bell that ſhall Chriſtians warn
To holy rites within theſe fated walls?
How many hundred years this ſacred pavement
Has with the tread of Chriſtian feet been worn!
And now —— Heaven's will be done!

PRIEST.

So muſt we ſay, if that our turn be come,
We are a wicked and luxurious race,
And we have pull'd this ruin on our heads.

HEUGHO.

But there are thoſe who needs muſt fall beneath it,
Whoſe noble worth deſerv'd a better fate.

PRIEST.

Think ye the grand aſſault will be ſo ſoon?

HEUGHO.

'Tis ſo believ'd: and ſee where now they come,
In gen'rous love and brotherhood united,
Who ſhall, perhaps, no more ſee evening's cloſe,
Or under ſocial roof of living men
E'er meet again.

PRIEST.

Nay, do not weep, good Heugho;
For in that bleſſed place they ſhall be join'd
Where great and good men meet.—But I muſt haſte
To give my brethren notice. *(Exit.*

Enter CONSTANTINE, *with* OTHUS, RODRIGO, JUSTINIANI, *and others of his friends, who walk with ſolemn ſteps and bareheaded towards the front of the ſtage, the great bell ſounding for the laſt time as they advance.* Conſtantine *then ſtops, and ſtretching out his arm as if he wiſhed to ſpeak, they all gather reſpectfully round him.*

CONSTANTINE.

My friends, there greatly preſſes on my heart
Somewhat I've much deſir'd to ſay to you.
If a full heart will grant me ſo much voice.

OTHUS.

Then ſpeak it, royal ſire, we all attend
With ears of love and moſt profound reſpect.

CONSTANTINE.

Thus ſtation'd on a dark and awful verge,
In company with you, my noble friends,
I have deſired, in this ſolemn act,
To make my peace with God. But, on my ſoul,

If any unforgiven wrong to man
Yet reſts, how ſhall I lift my hands to him
Who has made all men, and who cares for all,
As children of one grand and wond'rous houſe,
Wherein the mightieſt monarch of the earth
Holds but a little nook?
I have been one, plac'd on a giddy height
Of ſeeming greatneſs, therefore liable,
In nature's poor infirmity, to acts
Of blind and fooliſh pride. I have been one
In much real feebleneſs, upheld, defended,
By voluntary aid and gen'rous zeal
Of valiant ſtrangers owing me no ſervice.
And therefore liable, in the mind's weakneſs,
Its ſaddeſt weakneſs, to ungrateful thoughts
Tinctur'd with jealouſy. If towards you,
My noble friends, I have contracted guilt,
I truſt—I know—I beg—what ſhall I ſay?
Your gen'rous hearts to all your deeds of love
Will add a laſt forgiveneſs.

OTHUS.

O no, moſt royal Conſtantine! to us
And to all men thou'ſt ever worthy been,
Noble and gracious; pardon at our hands
Thou needeſt none.

OMNES.

O no, thou needeſt none!
As we to thee have faithful followers been,
Thou'ſt ever been to us a gen'rous lord.

CONSTANTINE.

Your love would make it ſo: would that, indeed,
A voice within me ſeal'd its fair report!
Alas! it doth not; therefore now indulge me.
If there be one amongſt you, unto whom,
With dark forbidding brow, in a ſtern moment,
I've given ungen'rous pain; one whoſe kind ſervice.
I have with fooliſh and capricious humours
More irkſome made; one whoſe frank openneſs
Of manly love, offer'd to me as man
In gen'rous confidence, with heartleſs pride
I coldly have repell'd; yea, if there be
One of you all that ever from my preſence
I have with ſadden'd heart unkindly ſent,
I here, in meek repentance, of him crave
A brother's hand, in token of forgiveneſs.
And be it in true charity ſtretch'd forth,
As to a man of much infirmity,
Who has with many trials been beſet,
Wounding oft-times in bitterneſs of ſoul
The love he ſhould have honour'd.
What! is there none that will to me hold out
The palm of charity?
Then I'll embrace ye all, and, with eas'd heart,
Believe myſelf forgiven. *(Embracing them all as they crowd affectionately to him, and comin laſt to* Rodrigo.)
And thou, my bold Rodrigo, who canſt brave

The tempeſts when they rage, and onward bear,
With the oppoſed ſtrength of towering navies
Black'ning before thee, com'ſt thou to my breaſt
In ſoft forgiving love? I know thou doſt.

RODRIGO.

Ay, in that love that would forgive to thee
The ſum of all thy ſins, tho' multiplied
Ten thouſand thouſand fold.—
That would do in thy ſervice—O curſed limit!
That there ſhould be what to man's ſinew'd ſtrength,
In all the burning zeal of righteous boldneſs,
Impoſſible is. *(Clenching his hands vehemently.)*

OTHUS *(to* Rodrigo).

Ceaſe! doſt thou not reſpect theſe holy walls?

RODRIGO.

I do reſpect them, Othus; ne'er a head,
Shorn to the ſcalp, doth bow itſelf more humbly
Before heaven's throne than mine, albeit in truth
My words unſeemly are.

CONSTANTINE.

Come to my heart, my friend! He reigns above
Who will forgive us both. *(Embraces* Rodrigo, *and then obſerving* Heugho, *who has ſtood behind, not preſuming to approach him with the reſt.)*
But there is one who ſtands from me aloof

With modeſt backwardneſs, unto whoſe charity
I muſt be debtor alſo. Worthy Heugho,
Since earlieſt youth I from thy friendly hand
Have daily kindly offices receiv'd,
Proffer'd with love, exceeding far all duty
Belonging to thy ſtate; yet, ne'ertheleſs,
I once, in a moſt vile and fretful mood,
Vex'd with croſs things, thine honour'd age forgot.

HEUGHO.

Oh, ſay not ſo, my dear and royal maſter.
It breaks my heart that you ſhould ſtill remember.

CONSTANTINE.

Well, well, be not thus mov'd, my worthy Heugho,
I know I am forgiv'n; but lay thy hand,
Thine aged hand, upon thy maſter's head,
And give him a laſt bleſſing. Thou art now
Like to an ancient father with us grown,
And my heart ſays that it will do me good.

(Bowing his head, whilſt Heugho, *lifting up his aged hands over him, is unable to ſpeak, but burſts into tears, and falls upon his maſter's neck. The band of friends cloſe round and conceal them: afterwards they open to make way, and* Conſtantine *comes forward with a firm enlightened countenance.)*

And now, my noble friends, it pleaſes me
To think we all are knit in holy bands

Of fellowſhip; prepar'd, in virtue's ſtrength,
Nobly to fight on earth, or meet in heaven.

OTHUS.

Yes, Conſtantine, we to each other will
True brothers prove, and to our noble chief
Devoted followers, whate'er betide.
What ſay ye, valiant friends?

OMNES.

All, all of us!

CONSTANTINE.

I know you will, full well, I know you will.
Oh, that in earth it had been granted me
Your gen'rous love to've recompens'd! alas!
Ye can but ſhare with me ———

OMNES.

No other recompenſe,
But ſharing fates with thee, our noble chief,
Do we deſire, and on thy royal hand
Here will we ſeal it.

CONSTANTINE *(eagerly preventing them as they are about to kneel and kiſs his hands).*

Forbear! forbear! within theſe ſacred walls
Bend before worthleſs man the humble knee!
Fye, let not ſuch ſhame be!
Am I your chief? then be it ſhewn in this,
That to the mighty Majeſty of heaven

I humbly bow, more lowly than ye all,
And do, on your behalf, devoutly beg
The bleſſing of our Maſter and our Sire.
(Kneeling and bowing his head very low to the ground, then riſing afterwards with dignified ſolemnity.)
Now to thoſe ſacred rites of our bleſt faith,
In which the humble ſoul ennobled bows,
In mem'ry of the deareſt brotherſhip
That ever honour'd man, I lead you on,
My noble brothers. *(Exeunt* Conſtantine, *&c. by another aiſle, which may be ſuppoſed to lead to the altar of the church, whilſt ſeveral prieſts are ſeen at a diſtance in their robes, as if waiting to receive them.)*

SCENE III. *A Hall, or Anti-room in the Imperial Palace.*

Enter PETRONIUS *and* MARTHON *diſguiſed.*

PETRONIUS.

So far hath this well-counterfeited ſignet,
And this diſguiſe, befriended us: here ſtop:
Whilſt Conſtantine and his mad band are abſent
On their religious ceremony, here
We will remain conceal'd until that Ella,
Returning (for 'tis near her wonted time,
As they have told us) from Valeria's chamber,
Shall give us fair occaſion.—Rouſe thee, Marthon;

Thou ſeem'ſt like one bereaved of all ſenſe;
What is the matter with thee?

MARTHON.

Nothing; but thus to paſs with culprit feet
Beneath the ſhade of night, theſe well-known courts
Which I ſo oft have trod in front of day,
With the firm footſteps of an honeſt man,
Doth make me ———

PETRONIUS.

Fye! thou art become a fool.
Shake off ſuch weakneſs: we're compell'd to this.
We ſhall beneath the ſultan's iron ſway,
Diſgrac'd from the late failure of our plots,
Live like laſh'd ſlaves, if the bewitching beauty
Of my young Ella come not to our aid
To bend his rugged nature. Strong in her,
We ſhall not merely ſafe protection find,
But higheſt favour and authority;
And tho' by ſtealth I needs muſt bear her hence,
Being my daughter, I, in nature's right ———

MARTHON.

Huſh! now I hear a lightly-ſounding ſtep.
Draw back a little ſpace. *(They ſtep aſide, whilſt* Ella *enters, and walks acroſs the ſtage.)*

PETRONIUS *(in a half voice, ſtealing ſoftly up to her.)*
Ella!

ELLA *(ſtarting)*.

What voice is that which names me?

PETRONIUS.

Ella!

ELLA.

Oh! 'tis the ſound that I moſt dread to hear!

PETRONIUS.

Say'ſt thou ſo, Ella, of thy father's voice?
Have my misfortunes, with the world's fair favour,
Depriv'd me alſo of my only child?

ELLA.

No, no! they have not: had misfortune only
Caſt its dark ſhade upon thee, I had lov'd thee
And cheriſh'd thee in a lone deſert, father.
But—but thou art———

PETRONIUS.

Ha! wherefore doſt thou pauſe?
What would'ſt thou ſay? what is there in thy mind?

ELLA.

Thoughts which I will not utter.—Oh, depart!
Thou'rt not in ſafety. All men do condemn thee.
Thou art not come for good.—Oh, fly from hence!
Ruin, and ſhame, and death abide thee here:
Oh, fly, my wretched father.

PETRONIUS.

Yes, I will fly, but thou ſhalt go with me;
If not, I will remain and meet my fate.

ELLA.

Good heaven forbid! thou'lt drive me to diſtraction.
O miſery! *(Wringing her hands in great diſtreſs, whilſt* Marthon *advances to* Petronius *with ſupplicating look.)*

PETRONIUS.

Away! thou art a fool: we muſt be firm.
(To Marthon.)
Wring not thy hands thus wildly, ſimple maid:
Thou goeſt to be with me no wand'ring outlaw,
But one in ſplendour greater than a queen:
The favour'd miſtreſs of the mighty ſultan. *(To* Ella.)
(Ella *gives a loud ſhriek, and ſtruggles to get from him.)*

Enter RODRIGO.

RODRIGO.

Audacious villain! quit thy curſed hold,
Or take death for thy pains.
Ha! thou ſhrink'ſt back, and muffleſt up thy face.
Say who thou art, or thro' thy villain's heart
I'll thruſt this rapier.

ELLA *(pulling* Rodrigo *back)*.

Hold, I do beſeech thee!
For pity, hold! it is my wretched father.

RODRIGO.

Wretched indeed!

ELLA.

Ay, therefore pity him.
Let him eſcape: he hath done me no harm.
He is here as a fox in his laſt wiles,
Who ſhelter ſeeks within the very kennel
O' the rous'd pack: Oh, have ſome pity on him!
He is my father.

RODRIGO.

Sweet Ella, hang not thus upon mine arm:
It hath no power to ſtrike whom thou call'ſt father,
Shame as he is unto that honour'd name.
But there are ties upon me, gentle maid:
The ſafety and the intereſts of Conſtantine
I am bound to defend: and ſhall a traitor ———

ELLA.

Oh! oh!

RODRIGO.

Fear not: our royal maſter is return'd
From bleſſed rites of holieſt charity
With meekly chaſten'd ſoul: whate'er his crimes

He is in ſafety—ſafety as aſſured
As thine own harmleſs ſelf.

Enter CONSTANTINE.

CONSTANTINE *(to* Rodrigo).

Thou ſpeak'ſt with an unwonted earneſtneſs;
I've mark'd thy geſtures; ſomething moves thee much.
Who are theſe ſtrangers? *(Turning to* Petronius *and* Marthon, *who, uncovering their faces, ſtand confeſſed before him.)*
Ha! Marthon and Petronius! What new treaſon
Is now on foot, that here —— but judge I harſhly?
Ye are, perhaps, ſtruck with the circumſtances
Of theſe moſt ſolemn times, repentant grown,
And if ye be, in a good hour ye come;
I am myſelf a wean'd and pardon'd man.
Marthon, thou once wert wont to ſpeak the truth;
What brought ye hither?

MARTHON.

Moſt gracious prince, with no repentant mind
We hither came; but one of us, at leaſt,
Shall hence depart with a heart deeply ſmitten.

CONSTANTINE.

Confeſs then what new treaſon ye deviſed.

ELLA.

No treaſon; none to thee, moſt royal Conſtantine.

For me he came, arm'd with a parent's right,
To bear me to the haughty ſultan's camp,
To live in queenly ſtate. But, Oh protect me!
Let me remain and die with thoſe I love
In decent maiden pride. Retain me here,
But pardon him: no treaſon brought him hither.

CONSTANTINE.

Petronius, has thy daughter told me true;
Was this thine errand?

PETRONIUS (*approaching* Conſtantine).

Yes, moſt gracious prince.

CONSTANTINE.

Off then, diſgrace to nature and to manhood!
Would'ſt thou to ſhameful and degrading ſlavery
Betray thy virtuous child? Say thou cam'ſt hither
To thruſt i' the dark thy dagger thro' my heart,
And I will call thee ſinleſs.

PETRONIUS.

Wherefore this ſtern and bitter execration?
I came to place her but a few hours ſooner,
Sav'd from th' approaching ſtorm, where your high dames,
Yea, with their royal miſtreſs at their head,
Full ſhortly ſhall be placed.

CONSTANTINE.

Deteſted wretch! what fiend has whiſper'd to thee
Such hideous thoughts? man durſt not utter them.

PETRONIUS.

Man might, at leaſt, ſurveying the poſition
And aſpect of theſe times, in his own mind
This plain and ſhrewd conjecture form. But not
On ſuch looſe bottom do I ground my words;
Mah'met himſelf hath ſworn that your Valeria
Shall at the head of his moſt favour'd wives ——

CONSTANTINE.

Hold thy deteſted tongue! for one word more
Is inſtant death. Tempt me not with theſe hands,
Which hath the ſymbols touch'd of bleſſed peace,
To do a horrible act.

PETRONIUS.

I but repeat that which the ſultan hath
In public ſaid.

CONSTANTINE.

Forbear! forbear! I tell thee.
(Wrenching his ſword, ſcabbard and all, from his ſide, and toſſing it from him.)
There! there! Rodrigo: caſt it from my reach:
Let not a weapon be within my graſp,
Or I ſhall be accurſed. *(After a violent ſtruggle of paſſion.)*
I dare ſpeak to him now.—Ho! guards without!

ELLA.

Oh, mercy! mercy!

Enter GUARDS.

CONSTANTINE *(to* Guards).

Take these two men, Petronius and his friend,
And thro' the city to our outmost post
Conduct them safely: there, in perfect liberty,
Permit them to depart where'er they list.
(To Petronius.) Now, I'm revenged upon thee: get thee hence,
And utter not a word.—Go thou, Rodrigo,
And with the gentle Ella in thy hand,
Conduct them to the palace gate. Hence quickly!

MARTHON.

Nay, let Petronius go: I will remain,
And with the meanest soldier on your walls
Spend my last blood, if a true penitent ——

CONSTANTINE *(waving him off impatiently).*

Well, be it as thou wilt: but hence and leave me!

RODRIGO *(to* Ella, *as he leads her out).*

Did I not tell thee he was safe, my Ella?

(Exeunt all but Constantine, *who, after walking up and down for some time in a perturbed manner, starts at the sound of* Valeria's *voice without.)*

CONSTANTINE.

Ha! here she comes! alas! how shall I now

Look on her face, and hear her voice of love!
It is diſtraction!

Enter VALERIA.

VALERIA.

My Conſtantine, art thou ſo long return'd,
And yet to me no kindly ſummons ſent,
Long as I've watch'd for it?—What is the matter?
Thy brow is dark: theſe are diſturbed looks:
What is the matter?

CONSTANTINE.

Nothing, nothing.
I am, thou know'ſt, with many cares perplex'd.
Follow me to thine own apartment; here
I cannot ſpeak to thee.

VALERIA *(aſide, looking eagerly at him as, they go out).*

What may this be! *(Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Valeria's *Apartment.*

Enter CONSTANTINE, *followed by* VALERIA, *who remain ſilent for ſome time, ſhe looking anxiouſly with wiſtful expectation.*

VALERIA.

Now we are here, my Lord, in the ſtill privacy
Of this my inmoſt bower, but thou art ſilent.
(Pauſes, and he is ſtill ſilent.)

There is a look of ſadneſs on thy face
Of diſturb'd wretchedneſs, that never yet,
Ev'n in thy darkeſt hours, I've ſeen thee wear:
Why art thou thus?

CONSTANTINE.

And doſt thou aſk? I've been, in deep humility,
Making a ſinner's peace with God and man,
And now —— and now —— *(His voice faultering.)*

VALERIA.

What would you ſay, my lord?

CONSTANTINE.

And now I am with thee.

VALERIA.

And art thou ſad for this? haſt thou not ſtill,
Looſe from all ſhackles of impoſed ſtate,
Been with me in thine hours of joy or grief,
Like a way-faring man, who ſitting down
On the green bank, his cumb'rous veſtment opens
To the ſoft breeze?

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, my Valeria; I have been with thee
As with a true yoke heart, ſo ſtrong in love
That ev'n the thought which ſcudded o'er my mind
With culprit's ſpeed from ſhameful conſciouſneſs,
Was not from thee conceal'd.

But now the hour is come, when ev'n with thee
I muſt perform a taſk—a taſk of pain.

VALERIA.

Speak; what mean'ſt thou?

CONSTANTINE.

All have, ev'n in the deareſt intercourſe
Of heart with heart, in ſome untoward moment
Tranſgreſſors been, and prov'd the cauſe of pain
Where moſt they ſhould have baniſh'd it: and all,
In quitting earthly ties, do anxiouſly
Deſire, in the true bleſſing of forgiveneſs,
To part with thoſe whom they have held moſt dear.
Now doſt thou underſtand me? *(Holding out both his hands to her.)*

VALERIA.

I do! I do! thou haſt my deareſt bleſſing.
The deareſt thoughts and worſhip of my heart.
But oh! what doſt thou ſay?—part!—how, my Conſtantine!
Where doſt thou go? thou doſt not leave the city?

CONSTANTINE.

No, love, but on its wall I go ere long,—
For in a little hour the day will break
Which muſt its fate decide,—that part to act,
Which, before God and man, in honeſt pride,
I'm call'd on to perform.

VALERIA.

But from thoſe walls victorious thou'lt return.
(Conſtantine *ſmiles ſorrowfully.*)
Nay, but thou ſhalt return: high heav'n decrees it;
Virtue, and every good and bleſſed thing
Have made it ſure. Ev'n in a faith as ſtrong
As at this moment I do hold to this,
Methinks, upon the chaf'd and toſſing waves
Of the wild deep I could thus firmly tread,
Nor wet my ſandal's thong. *(Walking acroſs the ſtage with firm ſteps of ſtately confidence, and then going up to him with an encouraging ſmile.)*
Be thou aſſur'd!
I know it ſhall be ſo. A myſtic ſage,
Whom I, unknown to thee, have viſited—
Pardon this weakneſs of thine anxious wife—
Darting his eye on forms of woven air,
Saw thee in combat with a Turkiſh champion,
And ſaw the creſcent fall.

CONSTANTINE.

And may'ſt thou not believe, that ere they cloſe
Their mortal warfare, many a boaſtful Turk
Beneath theſe arms ſhall fall?

VALERIA.

Ay, but on ſurer words I reſt my faith!
For I did bid him onward caſt his eye
Into time's reach, and ſay, who of this city,

After the courſe of twelve revolving moons,
Should be the ſov'reign lord; and he replied,
In plain and ſimple words, thy lord and huſband.

CONSTANTINE.

And nam'd he Conſtantine?

VALERIA.

What other name but that of Conſtantine
Could to theſe appellations be conjoin'd?
Thou turneſt from me with perturbed looks:
Thou ſhalt not turn away: tell me! O, tell me!
What ſudden thought is this that troubles thee?
(Catching hold of him eagerly as he turns from her.)

CONSTANTINE.

Aſk not; Oh, do not aſk! 'tis paſs'd already
As ſhoots a glaring meteor 'thwart the night,
Frightful but haſty.

VALERIA.

Thou muſt tell it me.

CONSTANTINE.

Diſtract me not.

VALERIA.

Nay, nay, but thou muſt tell me.
What other name but that of Conſtantine
Could to my lord and huſband joined be?

CONSTANTINE *(ſinking down upon a chair quite overcome, and covering his face with his hands as he ſpeaks with a quick perturbed voice).*

Mahomet! Mahomet!

(Valeria *ſteps back from him, holding up her hands in amazement; then he, after a pauſe, looking up to her with a ſelf-upbraiding eye.)*

I have offended in this very hour
When my preſs'd ſoul ſigh'd for that loving peace
Which in its earthly cloſe the ſoul deſires.
I have offended.

VALERIA.

Yes, thou haſt offended.
All the offences thou haſt ever done me
Are in this fell and cruel ſtroke compris'd;
And any other ſtroke, compared to this,
Had fall'n upon me lightly.

CONSTANTINE.

It was a thought that haſted faſt away,
And came unbidden. *(Going up to her penitently.)*

VALERIA *(turning away in anger).*

There is no thought doth ever croſs the mind
Till ſome preceding kindred ſentiment
Hath made a path-way for it.

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, my Valeria, thou indeed ſay'ſt true;

But turn not from me angrily. My mind,
Ere now, conſider'd has the character,
The faith, the power of Mahomet.—Frown not.—
Valeria thou art fair.—Nay, do not frown!

VALERIA.

What doſt thou ſay? haſt thou until this moment
Reſerv'd for me this baſe degrading —— No:
Torn and defaced be every hated form
Of outward grace! it is our curſe, our ſhame!
(Tearing her hair violently.)

CONSTANTINE.

O be not thus!—forgive a haſty thought!
Think how a doating huſband is diſtracted,
Who knows too well a lawleſs victor's power.

VALERIA.

What is his power? it naught regardeth me.

CONSTANTINE.

Alas! the frowns of a deteſting bride
Deter him not!

VALERIA *(ſmiling contemptuouſly)*.

But will he wed the dead?

CONSTANTINE *(ſtarting).*

What ſay'ſt thou? Oh, what meaning is there here!
Yes, yes! I know it all! but it is dreadful:
It makes the cold chill o'er my limbs to creep:
It is not well: it is not holy. No!
O no, my noble love, mine honour'd love!
Give to thy fallen lord all that the ſoul
To widow'd love may give, but oh ſtop there?
Heav'n will protect thee in the hour of need;
And for the reſt, eraſe it from thy thoughts,
Give it no being there.

VALERIA.

It hath no being there. Heav'n will protect me:
And he who thinks me helpleſs thinks me mean.

CONSTANTINE.

I think thee all that e'er was tenanted
Of nobleſt worth in loveliеſt female form:
By nature excellent, defective only
In this, that fortune has thy virtues link'd
To the vex'd ſpirit of a ruin'd man,
Who in his hours of anguiſh has not priz'd them
As did become their worth.

VALERIA *(ruſhing into his arms).*

No, thou haſt priz'd them,
In thy blind love, far, far beyond their worth.

My uncurb'd paſſions have, alas! too oft
Vexation added to that burden'd heart
I ſhould have cheer'd and lighten'd: on my head
Reſts all the blame that e'er between us paſs'd,
And I alone have need to be forgiven.

(They weep on one another's necks without ſpeaking, when an alarm bell is heard at a diſtance, and Conſtantine *breaks ſuddenly from her.)*

CONSTANTINE.

It is the 'larum of my farther watch.

VALERIA.

I ſcarcely heard it: art thou ſure of it?

(A ſecond alarm bell heard nearer.)

CONSTANTINE.

And hark! a nearer tower repeats the ſound.
The enemy's in motion.—I muſt arm,
And inſtantly.

VALERIA.

Then let me be with thee till the laſt moment.
I have a holy relick of great power;
It is, I truſt, worth all thine arms beſide;
And from this hand of love thou ſhalt receive it.

CONSTANTINE *(ſmiling ſorrowfully.)*

Thanks, ſweet Valeria! from thy hand of love

I will with love receive whate'er thou wilt.

(A third alarm bell is heard ſtill louder, and enter Attendants in haſte.)

Yes, yes, I heard it; go, prepare mine arms.

(To Attendants, and exeunt.

SCENE V. *A ſpacious Hall in the Palace.*

Enter RODRIGO, *with* ELLA *hanging fondly upon him, and continue their way as if intending to paſs through it, when a trumpet ſounds without, and they ſtop ſhort.*

RODRIGO.

It is the ſound that ſummons us to meet:
There is no farther grace: therefore, ſweet Ella,
My pretty Ella, my good loving Ella,
My gentle little one that hang'ſt upon me
With ſuch fond hold, in good ſooth we muſt part,
Here bid heav'n bleſs me, and no farther go.

ELLA.

Muſt it be ſo? I will bid heaven bleſs thee,
And all good ſaints watch o'er thy precious life;
And they will bleſs and guard thee in the hour
Of fearful death. In this I have true faith;
Yet, on the very brink, to hold thee thus
Claſp'd in my graſp, and think how ſoon—Alas!
From many points will fly the whizzing balls,
And ſhowering darts, and jav'lins ſent afar,
Aim'd by fell ſtrength; wilt thou eſcape all this?

RODRIGO.

Fear not, ſweet Ella! whizzing balls there be
That, in midway, are from their courſe declin'd
By the poor orphan's little liſped prayer;
And there be arrows that are turn'd aſide,
In their ſwift flight, by the ſoft ſighs of love,
Unheard of earthly ears. This is a creed,
In the good faith of which poor ſeamen climb
Their rocking maſts, in the full roar of battle,
And we'll believe it.

ELLA.

It is a bleſſed one: I would believe it.

RODRIGO.

Yes, we'll believe it. Whilſt our battle roars,
Thou'lt think of me in thy lone diſtant tower,
And be to me a gallant armed mate,
With prayers and wiſhes ſtriving powerfully.
Give me thy hand: we will not weep and wail:
We will part cheerfully.—God bleſs thee, Ella!
Nay, hang not on me thus.
Thou lov'ſt a brave man: be thou valiant then,
As ſuits a brave man's love.

ELLA.

O no! I've fondly fix'd myſelf upon thee,
Moſt worthleſs and unſuited to thy worth.
Like a poor weed on ſome proud turret's brow,
I wave, and nod, and kiſs the air around thee,
But cannot be like thee.

RODRIGO.

Heav'n bleſs thee, little flower! I prize thee more
Than all the pride of female ſtatelineſs.

ELLA.

Doſt thou? then I am happy: I am proud:
I will not wiſh me other than I am.

RODRIGO.

Ah, if we part not inſtantly, my Ella,
I feel in faith, rude as my nature is,
I ſoon ſhall be like thee!—My friends approach:
Let us not meet their gaze—It muſt be ſo—
Sweet one, farewel!—Wilt thou ſtill cling to me?

ELLA.

O no, I go: they ſhall not ſee thee weep,
Tho' I do bleſs thee for it.

RODRIGO *(leading her haſtily back to the door by which they entered).*

Well then, brave laſs, upon thy lovely head
Heaven's favour reſt!—Nay, do not ſpeak to me.
(Preventing her as ſhe is endeavouring to ſpeak.)
Farewel! farewel! *(Exit* Ella, *and he returns to the front of the ſtage, where he ſtands muſing ſorrowfully; when enters to him* Juſtiniani, *and, going up to him, touches his ſhoulder.)*
What doſt thou want? *(Turning angrily.)*

JUSTINIANI.

Thou'rt thoughtful.

RODRIGO.

No, I think as others do
With ſuch day's work before them, in good truth,
Not paſſing merrily.

JUSTINIANI.

From the high tower I've ſeen th' approaching foe:
It ſeems a dark and ſtrangely-mixed maſs
Of life, wide moving in the miſty light
Of early dawn.—I've fought in many a field,
As valiant men and armed warriors fight,
But ſuch a ſtrange aſſemblage of new modes
Of mingled war as we this day muſt face,
I never yet encounter'd.

RODRIGO.

Well, we ſhall know the ſcent and flavour of it
When we have taſted it.

JUSTINIANI.

We ſhall be ſmother'd up with the mean preſs
Of worthleſs matter, as a noble ſteed,
Beneath the falling rafters of his ſhed
Ignobly periſhes.

RODRIGO.

Fear not, proud ſoul; we ſhall have men to fight,

And room enough in ſome nook of the breach
To grapple with them too.

JUSTINIANI.

Good fortune ever ſhone on thee, Rodrigo:
Thou ſtill haſt been a bold careering bark,
Outriding ev'ry ſtorm. If thou ſhouldſt e'er
Again return to our dear native land,
Tell to my countrymen whate'er thou know'ſt
Pertaining to my fate this fateful day:
Let me not be forgotten.

RODRIGO.

I will, my friend: but better fate than thine
I look not for, tho' ſtill I bear myſelf
As one aſſur'd of good.—Thou'rt dark and gloomy—
Does aught reſt on thy mind?

JUSTINIANI *(ſtriding away from him gloomily).*
No, nothing, nothing! *(A trumpet ſounds without.)*

RODRIGO.

Ay, hark, another of our gallant band
Has join'd us with his followers.
(Another trumpet ſounds.)
And now another: are they all aſſembled?

Enter OTHUS, *and ſeveral of the imperial Friends.*

OTHUS.

On their high wooden turrets, and huge beams

Of warlike engines, rais'd aloft in air,
Gleams the firſt light of this high-fated day;
And, wide expanded, thro' the farther miſts
Moves the dark Turkiſh hoſt.
Thou'rt a tried ſoul, Rodrigo, I but new
To ſuch tremendous, ſtrange expectancy:
Now is the hour when the ſoul knows itſelf.
(Riſing on tiptoe with a conſcious ſmile.)

RODRIGO.

Ay, Othus, thou doſt wear the countenance
Of a true man: give me thine honeſt hand.
Are all our friends aſſembled? *(Trumpet ſounds.)*

OTHUS.

This ſays they are: and here comes, laſt of all,
Our northern friends.

Enter more of the Friends.

Now we are all aſſembled. Conſtantine,
He alſo comes; and ſadly by his ſide,
In mournful dignity, moves his high dame,
Proudly contending with her woman's heart.

Enter CONSTANTINE *and* VALERIA, *attended.*

CONSTANTINE *(returning the general ſalute of the chiefs).*

Good morrow, noble brothers and brave leaders:
Are we all here conven'd?

OTHUS.

Yes, our great chief and brother: of your friends
There lacks not one.

CONSTANTINE.

Then to their love, ſo help me, Mighty Power,
Who hold'ſt within thy graſp the ſouls of men!
Neither ſhall we be lacking.——Now, Valeria.
(Drawing himſelf up with a proud but tender ſmile, as if to encourage her to behave nobly.)

VALERIA.

I underſtand that ſmile.
Here with thy gen'rous friends, whoſe love to thee
Moſt dearly celled in my heart I wear,
And unto whom I have deſired much,
Before we part, theſe grateful thanks to pay—
(Making greatful obeiſance to the chiefs.)
Here to thoſe noble friends, and to God's keeping,
I leave thee.——Yet, be it permitted me—
For that thy noble head and lib'ral brow
Have ever cheer'd me as my ſtar of day,
Bleſſings and bleſſings let me pour upon them!
(Putting her hand upon his head fervently, and kiſſing his forehead.)
For that thy gen'rous breaſt has been the hold
Of all my treaſur'd wiſhes and dear thoughts,
This fond embrace. *(Embracing him.)*
Yea, and for that thou art

My ſire, and ſov'reign, and moſt honour'd lord,
This humble homage of my heart receive.
(Kneeling and kiſſing his hand.)

CONSTANTINE *(raiſing and embracing her with great emotion).*

No more, my deareſt and moſt noble love!
Spare me, O ſpare me! Heaven be thy protection!
Farewel!

VALERIA.

Farewel! (Valeria *is led off by her Attendants, whilſt* Conſtantine *continues looking ſadly after her for ſome time, then turning to his friends, who gather about him, without ſaying a word, they go all off the ſtage together in profound ſilence.)*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *An open ſpace near the walls of the city, with half-ruin'd houſes on each ſide, and a row of arched pillars thrown acroſs the middle of the ſtage, as if it were the remains of ſome ruined public building; thro' which is ſeen, in the back-ground, a breach in the walls, and the confuſed fighting of the beſieged, enveloped in clouds of ſmoke and duſt. The noiſe of artillery, the battering of engines, and the cries of the combatants heard as the curtain draws up, and many people diſcovered on the front of the ſtage, running about in great hurry and confuſion, and ſome mounted upon the roofs of the houſes overlooking the battle.*

VOICE *(calling from the wall).*

See! ſee! how, cluſter'd on each other's backs,
They mount like ſwarming bees, or locuſts link'd
In bolt'ring heaps! Pour fire upon their heads!

SECOND VOICE.

Caſt down huge beams upon them!

THIRD VOICE.

Hurl down the looſen'd fragments of our wall!

FOURTH VOICE.

Ho! more help here! more ſtones! more beams!
more fire!
Weapons are uſeleſs now.

FIRST VOICE.

See how that giant Turk, like an arch fiend,
Climbs on yon living mountain of curv'd backs!
He gains the wall! O hurl him headlong down!
He is hurl'd down! *(A great ſhout from the beſieged.)*

SECOND VOICE.

Send to the emperor or to Rodrigo:
They on their diff'rent ſtations hold it bravely;
This is the weakeſt point. Ho! ſend for aid!
(Exeunt ſeveral ſoldiers from the walls as if running for ſuccour. The noiſe of artillery, &c. is heard as before, and afterwards a loud craſh as of ſome building falling. Enter many people in great terror from the walls, running off by the front of the ſtage different ways, and enter at the ſame time, CONSTANTINE *and ſome of his friends, who ſtop them.)*

CONSTANTINE.

Turn, turn! O turn, my friends! another puſh!
Let us ſtill ſtop the breach, or fall like men.
(Enter JUSTINIANI *from the walls with a haſty and diſordered ſtep, pale and writhing with pain.)*

Merciful heav'n! do mine eyes ſerve me truly?
Juſtiniani, with pale haggard face,
Retiring from his poſt!
Where are you going, chief? *(Stopping him ſternly.)*

JUSTINIANI.

Where nature, urg'd beyond the pith of nature,
Compels me. Midſt yon ſtreams of liquid fires,
And hurling ruins and o'erwhelming maſs
Of things unknown, unſeen, uncalculable,
All arms and occupation of a ſoldier
Are loſt and turn'd to naught: man's ſtrength is naught:
The fangs of hell are in my new-torn fleſh;
I muſt on for a ſpace and breathe freſh air.

CONSTANTINE.

Go to! this moment is the quiv'ring ridge
That ſtands between our ſucceſs or our ruin:—
The ſight of thy turn'd back from their ſcrew'd pitch
Will turn more hearts than all the preſſing foe:
Thou muſt not go.

JUSTINIANI.

I am a mortal man:
The fangs of fiends are in my new-torn fleſh:
Nature compels me, and I muſt have ſuccour.
(Exit haſtily, and writhing with pain.)

CONSTANTINE.

Alas! God pity him! one luckleſs moment

Of weakneſs and of anguiſh brings to him
A wound that cannot be up-bound. Poor nature!
(Enter many fugitives from the walls.)
Turn, turn, O ſoldiers! let not this ſhame be.
(To the fugitives.)
(As he is endeavouring with his friends to rally them and puſh forward, a terrible ſhout is heard, and enter a great crowd of fugitives from the walls.)
What ſhout was that?

FUGITIVE.

The Turks have gain'd the breach, and thro' it pour
Like an o'erboiling flood.

CONSTANTINE.

Then is the city loſt—the dark hour come—
And as an emperor my taſk is clos'd.
God's will be done! *(Throwing away the imperial purple.)*
Now is there left for me theſe ſinew'd arms,
And this good ſword, the wherewithal to earn
A noble ſoldier's death.
Come on with me who will, and ſhare the fate
Of a brave comrade.

A FUGITIVE *(joined by ſeveral others).*

Yes, we'll ſhare thy fate,
Comrade or ſov'reign, noble Conſtantine!
We will die by thy ſide. *(Exit* Conſtantine, *fol-*

lowed by his friends and ſeveral of the fugitives, and paſſing through the pillars to the back-ground, ruſhes amidſt the confuſion of the fight. A terrible noiſe of arms, &c. and preſently one of the pillars in the middle of the ſtage falling down, a wider view of the battle is opened, and the Turks are ſeen ruſhing through the breach, and bearing every thing before them.)

Re-enter CONSTANTINE *wounded, but ſtill fighting bravely, though oppreſſed with numbers, and falls down near the front of the ſtage, the enemy paſſing on and leaving him.*

CONSTANTINE.

Am I then left!
Oh, is there ne'er a Chriſtian ſoldier near me
That will cut off my head? Ho! thou Turk there!
(To a Turk who is going to paſs him.)

TURK.

Art thou not dead?

CONSTANTINE.

No, one half of me, Turk, is living ſtill,
(Raiſing himſelf half up from the ground.)
And ſtill a match for thee.

TURK.

Ha! ſay'ſt thou ſo? we'll put it to the proof.

Yet thou'rt a brave man, tho' thou art a Greek,
I would far rather let thee die in peace.

CONSTANTINE.

No, no! have at thee! *(puſhing at the Turk with his ſword, who turning againſt him as he is half raiſed from the ground, thruſts him through the body.)*
I thank thee, friendly foe-man, this will do:
Thou haſt done me good ſervice.

TURK.

And thou art welcome to it. Fare thee well!
A good death to thee! for thou art no Greek.
(Exit.)

CONSTANTINE.

Ay, this will do: this hath the true ſtern gripe
Of potent ſpeedy death. My taſk is cloſed.
I now put off theſe weeds of fleſh and blood,
And, thanks be unto him who cloth'd me in them!
Untarniſh'd with diſgrace. What cometh after
Full ſurely cometh well. 'Tis a dark paſs.——
(Catching at a dropt garment that has been left by ſome of the fugitives on the ground near him.)
Here is a ready ſhrowd to wrap my head:
This death deals ſhrewdly with me. *(Covers his face and dies, after a conſiderable ſtruggle.)*

Enter RODRIGO, OTHUS, *and* MARTHON, *with two or three of their followers, fighting bravely with a party of Turks, whom they beat off the ſtage.*

OTHUS.

Now for a ſpace thoſe ruffians ſtand aloof:
This is a pauſe that calls upon the mind:
What ſhall we do?

RODRIGO.

What do men do, when they together ſtand,
On the laſt perch of the ſwift-ſinking wreck?
Do they not bravely give their parting cheer,
And make their laſt voice loud and boldly ſound
Amidſt the hollow roarings of the ſtorm?
Ev'n ſo will we: we'll bear our manhood up
To the laſt puſh.

OTHUS.

Thou ſpeakeſt well, brave ſeaman: thou doſt ſpeak
What the heart owns: we will do even ſo.
But Oh, that our brave leader now were near us,
Living or dead! Doth no one know his fate?
I thought by him t' have died.

FIRST FOLLOWER.

What corpſe is this ſo cover'd? on its ſandal
It wears th' imperial bird in fretted gold.

OTHUS.

Then it is he! *(Tearing off the covering eagerly from the head of* Conſtantine.)
O thou brave heart! thou haſt got to thy reſt
With honour: heav'n be praiſed that thou haſt!
Here round thee our laſt gathering point ſhall be:
Here will we fight, nor ſhall thy honour'd body
Suffer, whilſt one of us has ſtrength to fight,
The ſlighteſt inſult.

RODRIGO.

Ay, they ſhall hack us into raven's meat,
Ere on his gallant corpſe there be impreſs'd
One touch of impious hands! *(A loud noiſe of ſhrieking and terror heard without.)*

OTHUS.

Hear the wild cries of terror and deſpair,
Mix'd with the din of carnage! Now thoſe cowards,
Who let this brave man all unaided periſh,
Are ſuff'ring that which, in his felleſt pinch,
The valiant never ſuffers.
But ſee, the enemy again returns
With doubled fury!

RODRIGO.

Come they? then we are ready for them. Yonder
Stands a ſmall walled dome, within whoſe portal
We for a time may face ten thouſand foes:

There will we take our ſtand, and there will we
Do our laſt deeds of men. Come on, brave mates!
Take up our honour'd treaſure; and, ſo burden'd,
He that doth grapple with us had as lief
Pull from the lion's hug his boſom'd whelp.

(The followers take up the body, and Othus *and* Rodrigo *retire, defending it bravely from a party of Turks, who enter and fall upon them as they are bearing it off.)*

SCENE II. *An apartment in one of the towers of the palace.*

Enter VALERIA *in great alarm, followed by* LUCIA *and Attendants.*

VALERIA.

Louder and louder ſtill the dreadful ſound
Of battle ſwells. Is it not nearer us?
This lofty tower the wideſt view commands;
Open that lattice quickly. *(Pointing to a window which* Lucia *opens, and then, ruſhing on eagerly to look, ſhrinks back again.)*
I pray thee look thyſelf, mine eyes are dark,
And I ſee nothing. Oh, what ſee'ſt thou?
Tell me whate'er it be.

LUCIA *(looking out).*

Nothing but clouds of ſmoke and eddying duſt:
A dun and grumly darkneſs ſpreads o'er all,
From which ariſe thoſe horrid ſounds, but naught
Diſtinctive of the fight can I diſcern.

VALERIA *(after pacing backward and forward with an unequal, reſtleſs, agitated ſtep).*

Oh, will this ſtate of toſſing agony
No termination have! Send out, I pray thee,
Another meſſenger.

LUCIA.

Indeed I have in little ſpace of time
Sent many forth, but none return again.

VALERIA.

In little ſpace! Oh it hath been a term
Of horrible length! ſuch as rack'd fiends do reckon
Upon their toſſing beds of ſurgy flames,
Told by the laſhes of each burning tide
That o'er them breaks.—Hark! the quick ſtep of one
With tidings fraught! Doſt thou not hear it?

LUCIA.

No;
I hear it not.

VALERIA.

Still is it the falſe coinage of my fears?
Ah! hearing, ſight, and every ſenſe is now
Falſe and deceitful grown.—I'll ſit me down,
And think no more but let the black hour paſs
In ſtill and fixed ſtupor o'er my head. *(Sits down upon a low ſeat, and ſupports her bended head upon both her hands.)*

LUCIA *(liſtening).*

Now I do hear the ſound of real feet
In haſte approaching.

VALERIA *(ſtarting up).*

Some one brings us tidings.
What may they be? Quick ſteps ſhould bring us good.

Enter MESSENGER.

Say all thou haſt to ſay, and ſay it quickly.
If it be good hold up thy bleſſed hand,
And I will bleſs the token.—No, thou doſt not!
'Tis evil then.—How is it with my lord?
What dangers ſtill encompaſs him?

MESSENGER.

No dangers.

VALERIA.

And doſt thou ſay ſo with that terrible look?
Is he alive? Have all deſerted him?

MESSENGER.

No, round his body ſtill ſome brave men fight,
And will not quit him till they be as he is.

(Valeria, *uttering a loud ſhriek, falls back into the arms of her attendants, and is carried off, followed by* Lucia *and the* Meſſenger.)

SCENE III. *A hall in the palace.*

Enter a Crowd of frightened Women, and ſeem hurrying on to ſome place of greater ſecurity.

FIRST WOMAN *(ſtopping).*

No, we are wrong; we'll to the eaſtern tower,
That is the moſt retir'd; that laſt of all
Will tempt their ſearch.

SECOND WOMAN.

In the deep vaulted caverns of the palace,
Might we not for a while conceal'd remain,
Till heav'n ſhall ſend us means?

OMNES.

Ay, thou art right; that is the beſt of all:
We'll to the vaults. *(As they are all turning and hurrying back again, enter a domeſtic Officer of the palace, and ſtops them.)*

OFFICER.

Where do you run with ſuch wild looks of fear?
Think ye the Turks are paſſing thro' the city,
Like the ſhort viſit of a ſummer's ſtorm.
That you in holes and rocks may ſafely hide
Until it be o'erblown?

FIRST WOMAN.

Oh, no! we know that they are come for ever!
Yet for a little while we fain would ſave us
From fearful things.

OFFICER.

I come to tell you that by Mah'met's orders
The cruel Turks have ſtopp'd their bloody work,
And peace again is in our walls.

FIRST WOMAN.

Say'ſt thou?
And art thou ſure of this? and haſt thou ſeen it?

OFFICER.

Yes, I have ſeen it. Like a ſudden gleam
Of fierce returning light at the ſtorm's cloſe,
Glancing on horrid ſights of waſte and ſorrow,
Came the ſwift word of peace, and to the eye
Gave conſciouſneſs of that which the wild uproar
And dire confuſion of the carnage hid.

FIRST WOMAN.

Alas! be there ſuch ſights within our walls?

OFFICER.

Yes, maid, ſuch ſights of blood! ſuch ſights of nature!
In expectation of their horrid fate,
Widows, and childleſs parents, and 'lorn dames,
Sat by their unwept dead with fixed gaze,
In horrible ſtillneſs.
But when the voice of grace was heard aloud,
So ſtrongly ſtirr'd within their rouſed ſouls
The love of life, that, even amidſt thoſe horrors,

A joy was ſeen—joy hateful and unlovely.
I ſaw an aged man riſe from an heap
Of grizly dead, whereon, new murder'd, lay
His ſons and grandſons, yea, the very babe
Whoſe cradle he had rock'd with palſied hands,
And ſhake his grey locks at the ſound of life
With animation wild and horrible.
I ſaw a mother with her murder'd infant
Still in her arms faſt lock'd, ſpring from the ground—
No, no! I ſaw it not! I ſaw it not!
It was a hideous fancy of my mind:
I have not ſeen it.
But I forget my chiefeſt errand here.

FIRST WOMAN.

And what is that?

OFFICER.

It is to bid you tell your royal miſtreſs,
It may, perhaps, ſomewhat aſſuage her grief,
That Othus and Rodrigo, with ſome followers,
The laſt remains of the imperial band,
Fighting, in all the ſtrength of deſperation,
Around the body of their fallen chief,
Have mov'd to gen'rous thoughts the ſultan's breaſt;
Who has their valour honour'd with full leave,
In bleſſed ground, with military pomp,
Becoming his high ſtate and valiant worth,
To lay his dear remains. This with their lives
On honourable terms he freely grants.

FIRST WOMAN.

And do thoſe brave men live?

OFFICER.

They do; but Othus ſoon I fear will be
With him he mourns.—Delay no more, I pray;
Inform the empreſs ſpeedily of this.

FIRST WOMAN.

Alas! ſhe is not in a ſtate to hear it:
The phrenzy of her grief repels all comfort.—
But ſoftly!—huſh!—methinks I hear her voice.
She's coming hither in the reſtleſs wand'rings
Of her untamed mind.—Stand we aſide,
And ſpeak not to her yet.

Enter VALERIA *with her hair diſhevelled, and in all the wild diſorder of violent ſorrow, followed by* Ella *and* Lucia, *who ſeem endeavouring to ſoothe her.*

VALERIA.

Forbear all words, and follow me no more.
I now am free to wander where I liſt;
To howl i' the deſert with the midnight winds,
And fearleſs be amidſt all fearful things.
The ſtorm has been with me, and I am left
Torn and uprooted, and laid in the duſt
With thoſe whom after-blaſts rend not again.
I am in the dark gulf where no light is.
I am on the deep bed of ſunken floods,

Whoſe ſwoln and welt'ring billows riſe no more
To bear the toſſed wreck back to the ſtrand.

LUCIA.

Oh, ſay not ſo! heav'n doth in its good time
Send conſolation to the ſharpeſt woe.
It ſtill in kindneſs ſends to the tried ſoul
Its keeneſt ſuff'rings. So ſay holy men;
And therein good men truſt.

VALERIA.

I hear, I hear thee! in mine ear thy voice
Sounds like the feeble night-fly's humming noiſe
To him, who in the warfare of vex'd ſleep,
Strives with the phantoms of his inward world.
Yes, there be comfort when the ſun is dark,
And time hath run his courſe, and the ſtill'd ſleepers
Lift up their heads at the tremendous craſh
Of breaking worlds.—I know all this.—But here,
Upon this living earth, what is there found?
It is a place of groans and hopeleſs woe.
Let me then tear my hair and wring my hands,
And raiſe my voice of anguiſh and deſpair,
This is my portion now, all elſe is gone.

LUCIA.

Nay, think not virtuous innocence forſaken:
Put in high heav'n thy truſt, it will ſuſtain thee.

VALERIA.

Ah! I did think when virtue bravely ſtood,

Fronting its valiant breaſt to the fierce onſet
Of worthleſs power, that it full ſurely ſtood:
That ev'ry ſpiritual and righteous power
Was on its ſide: and in this faith, oftimes,
Methought I could into the furnace mouth
Have thruſt my hand, and graſp'd the molten flames.
Yet on his head it fell: that noble head,
Upon whoſe manly gracefulneſs was fix'd
The gaze of ev'ry eye.
Oh! on his lib'ral front there beam'd a look,
Unto the which all good and gen'rous hearts
Anſwer return'd.—It was a gentle head,
Bending in pleaſant kindlineſs to all;
So that the timid, who approach'd him trembling,
With cheer'd and vaunting ſteps retir'd again.
It was a crowned head, yet was it left
Expos'd and fenceleſs in the hour of danger:
What ſhould have been his ſafety was his bane.
Away, poor mock'ry of a wretched ſtate!
(Tearing the regal ornaments from her neck, and ſcattering them about.)
Be ye ſtrew'd to the winds! But for this let
We had been bleſt; for he as truly loved,
In ſimpleſt tenderneſs, as the poor hind,
Who takes his humble houſe-mate by the hand,
And ſays, "this is my all."—Off, curſed band!
Which round our happineſs hath been entwin'd
Like to a ſtraggling cord: upon the earth
Be thou defac'd and trampled! *(Tearing the tiara from her head, and ſtamping upon it, then pacing up and down diſtractedly.)*

LUCIA.

Alas! my royal miſtreſs, be intreated!
This furious grief will but enhance its pain:
Oh, bear yourſelf as more becomes your ſtate!

VALERIA.

Yes, I will bear me as becomes my ſtate.
I am a thing of wretchedneſs and ruin.
That upon which my pride and being grew
Lies in the duſt, and be the duſt my bed.
(Throwing herſelf upon the ground, and puſhing away Lucia *and her other Attendants, who endeavour to raiſe her up again.)*
Forbear! forbear! and let me on the ground
Spread out my wretched hands. It pleaſes me
To think that in its breaſt there is a reſt—
Yea, there lie they, unheeded and forgotten,
To whom all tongues give praiſe, all hearts give bleſſing.
Oh, ev'ry heart did bleſs him tho' he fell,
And ne'er a ſaving hand was found—Oh! oh!
(Burſting into an agony of grief, and laying her head upon the ground, covered with both her hands.)

ELLA *(to* Lucia *and Attendants).*

Do not ſurround her thus! I'll ſit and watch her.
I will not ſpeak, but ſit and weep by her;
And ſhe ſhall feel, ev'n thro' her heavy woe,
That ſympathy and kindneſs are beſide her.

VALERIA *(raiſing her head).*

There ſpoke a gentle voice: is Ella near me?

ELLA.

Yes, I am near, and ſhall be ever near you.

VALERIA.

Wilt thou? I do believe, ſweet maid, thou wilt.
Lay thy ſoft hand on mine.—Yes, it feels kindly.
Had he, thy valiant love, been near his lord—
Ay, they did love each other with that love
Which brave men know—Oh, ev'ry noble ſtranger,
In admiration of his noble worth,
Did call him lord; whilſt they, his native ſubjects,
They who had ſeen him grow within their walls,—
Alas! where lightly tripp'd his infant ſteps;
Where in gay ſports his ſtripling's ſtrength was tried;
Where tower'd in graceful pride his manly bloom;
Even there a lifeleſs, ghaſtly form he lies.

Enter another Domeſtic OFFICER, *and ſeeing* Valeria *on the ground ſteps back.*

LUCIA *(to the* Officer).

What would'ſt thou here?

OFFICER.

I muſt, perforce, ſpeak my unwelcome tidings.
The ſultan is already in the palace,
And follows hard my ſteps with a fix'd purpoſe
To ſee the empreſs.

VALERIA *(raiſing herſelf half from the ground).*

What fearful words are theſe? in my ſoul's anguiſh
Comes this ſo quickly on me? Be it ſo!
I cleave to th' earth! what have I now to do?
I am a ſtilled thing, abas'd and cruſh'd;
What boots it now who gazes on my woe?

Enter MAHOMET *with* OSMIR *and his Train.*

MAHOMET *(to* Oſmir, *after looking at* Valeria *ſteadfaſtly).*

She ſtirs not, Oſmir, ev'n at my approach,
She ſits upon the ground, unmov'd and ſtill.
Thou ſorrow-clouded beauty, not leſs lovely
(Going up to her.)
For this thy mournful ſtate!—She heeds me not.
Empreſs and ſov'reign dame, unto thoſe titles
Which thou ſhalt ever wear, vouchſafe regard.
Still ſhe regards me not. *(To* Oſmir.)
Widow of Conſtantine; *(After a pauſe.)*

VALERIA *(rouſing herſelf quickly).*

Ay, now thou calleſt on me by a name
Which I do hear. There is ſtrength in the ſound
To do all poſſible things! *Riſing quickly from the ground, and accoſting* Mahomet *with an air of high aſſumed ſtate.)*
What would'ſt thou ſay to her who proudly wears
That honour'd title?

MAHOMET.

Widow of Conſtantine; I come not here
In the ſtern ſpirit of a conqu'ror.
The ſlaughter of your people, by my order,
Is ſtopp'd; and to your bravely fallen lord
I have decreed ſuch fun'ral obſequies
As ſuits a valiant warrior and a king.
Othus, and brave Rodrigo, and thoſe men
Who to the laſt their maſter's corpſe defended,
I have with honour grac'd.—Lacks there aught ſtill
That, from the dark cloud which ſo deeply ſhades
That awful beauty, one approving ray
Might ſoftly draw? Speak, and it ſhall be done.

VALERIA.

Aſk aught from thee!

MAHOMET.

Yes, whatſoe'er thou wilt:
For now too well I feel I have no power
That can oppoſe thy will.

VALERIA.

I give you thanks: I have a thing to aſk.

MAHOMET.

Name it, and it is granted.

VALERIA.

A place in the quiet tomb with my fall'n lord,
Therein to reſt my head. This is my boon.

MAHOMET.

Well, and it ſhall be granted, fair Valeria,
When that fair form is fitted for ſuch reſt.
But whilſt— *(Approaching her with an air of freer admiration.)*

VALERIA *(putting him at a diſtance haughtily).*

No more :—I do not aſk it ſooner.
Yet that it be a ſealed deed between us,
Permit me here to put into your hands
A mark'd memorial. Some few paces off
It is depoſited ; I will return
And give it to you inſtantly. *(Exit, attended by Lucia, Ella, &c.)*

MAHOMET *(to* Oſmir, *looking after her as ſhe goes out).*

See, with what awful lovelineſs ſhe moves !
Did all our bower'd priſons e'er contain
Aught like to that ?

OSMIR.

It does, indeed, a wond'rous mixture ſeem
Of woman's lovelineſs with manly ſtate ;
And yet, methinks, I feel as tho' it were

Strange, and perplexing, and unſuitable.
'Tis not in nature.

MAHOMET.

Think'ſt thou ſo, good vizir?
Thou'rt right, belike, but it is wond'rous graceful.
(A loud ſhriek of women heard without.)
What ſhrieks are theſe? Run thou and learn the cauſe. (Oſmir *going, is prevented by* Valeria, *who re-enters with her robe wrapped acroſs her breaſt, and ſupported by* Lucia, *and* Ella, *and her other Attendants, who ſeem in great affliction round her.*

VALERIA *(ſpeaking as ſhe enters).*

Mourn not; the thing is paſt that was to be.
Conduct me to the ſultan: I have ſtill
Strength to fulfil my taſk.

MAHOMET.

Great Prophet! what is this? What haſt thou done? *(To* Valeria.)

VALERIA.

Brought thee the mark'd memorial of my right.
(Shewing a dagger.)
And that I now am fitted for that reſt,
The honour'd reſt which you have granted me,
Being the fix'd condition of your promiſe,
Here is the witneſs. *(Opening her robe, and ſhewing the wound in her breaſt.)*

MAHOMET.

Oh ſad and cruel ſight! Is there no aid?
Oh live, thou wond'rous creature, and be aught
Thy ſoul deſires to be!

VALERIA *(after ſinking back into a ſeat, ſupported by her Attendants).*

I now am what my ſoul deſires to be,
And what one happy moment of wound ſtrength
Beyond the pitch of ſhrinking nature makes me;
Widow of Conſtantine, without reproach,
And worthy to partake the honour'd reſt
Of the brave lord whoſe living love I ſhar'd,
As ſhares the noble wife a brave man's love.

MAHOMET.

Prophet of God, be there ſuch ties as theſe!

Enter RODRIGO, *and* OTHUS *wounded and ſupporting himſelf feebly upon his ſheathed ſword.*

VALERIA.

And here come, in good time, my living friends:
I ſhall once more thoſe gen'rous men behold,
The ſad remains of thoſe who lov'd their lord.
(Holding out a hand to each of them.)
You know brave brothers, how it is with me;
For ſuch you were to him, and ſuch to me
My heart now truly owns you.

OTHUS.

Yes, we have heard: they told us as we enter'd.
Moſt noble woman, worthy of thy lord!
(Endeavouring feebly to kneel and kiſs her hand, whilſt Rodrigo *does ſo on the other ſide of her.)*

VALERIA.

This day's rough tempeſt's o'er, my good Rodrigo,
And thou ſtill liv'ſt to ſtrive in other ſtorms:
Heaven's high bleſſing and my dying thanks
Reſt on thy gen'rous worth!—I would ſay more,
But now I feel I may not.
Where art thou, Ella? *(Putting* Ella's *hand in his.)*
Here do I return
The truſt thou gaveſt me; and if the ſultan
Will yet to me one laſt requeſt vouchſafe,
He will confirm this gift.

MAHOMET.

It is confirm'd.

VALERIA.

I thank you, gracious victor.
Heaven bleſs you both! *(To* Ella *and* Rodrigo, *who both kneel and kiſs her hands.)*
Othus, the dead go to their ſilent reſt,
(To Othus, *looking fixedly at him.)*
And are no more remember'd: but thy lord—
He whom thou lovedſt—he whom all hearts lov'd—

He who ſo noble and ſo gentle was—
Well ſkill'd art thou to paint the deeds of men—
Thou wilt not ſuffer him to be forgotten?
What means that woeful motion of thy head?
Mine eyes wax dim, or do I truly ſee thee?
Thy viſage has a ſtrange and ghaſtly look:
How is it with thee?

OTHUS.

As one who ſtandeth at the city's gate,
Thro' which his earlier friends have paſt, and waits
Impatiently, girt in his traveller's robe,
To hear the welcome creaking of its bars.

VALERIA.

Ah! art thou wounded then? Alas! alas!
Art thou too of our company? ſad trav'llers
Unto a world unknown.

OTHUS.

Nay, ſay not ſad, tho' to a world unknown.
The foſter'd nurſling, at th' appointed ſeaſon,
Who leaves his narrow crib and cottage-home
For the fair manſion of his lordly ſire,
Goes to a world unknown.

VALERIA.

Ay, thou would'ſt cheer me, and I will be cheer'd.
There reigns above who caſts his dark ſhade o'er us,
Mantling us on our way to glorious light.
I have offended, and I ſhould be fearful,

But there is ſent in mercy to my heart,
For which I humbly give —— O no, I may not!
Death is upon me now.——Ella and Lucia:
Stand cloſer to me: let me firmly graſp
Something that I have lov'd. *(Catching hold of them with a convulſive graſp.)*
It will ſoon ceaſe:
Farewel unto ye all! *(Dies.)*

(A ſolemn pauſe, all ſtanding round and gazing upon the body.)

OTHUS.

And this is the laſt form that we do wear,
Unto the ſad and ſolemn gaze of thoſe
Who have beheld us in our days of joy.
Honour and deepeſt rev'rence be to thee,
Thou honour'd dead! *(Bowing reſpectfully to the body.)*

MAHOMET.

Great God of heav'n! was this a woman's ſpirit
That took its flight?

RODRIGO.

Let ev'ry proudeſt worſhip be upon her,
For ſhe is number'd with the gallant dead.
Not in the trophied field, nor ſculptur'd dome;
No, nor beneath the dark and billowy deep
Lies one, o'er whom the valiant living would
With truer zeal their lofty banners wave,
Or bid the deep-mouth cannon nobly tell
How brave men mourn the brave.

How is it, Othus? ſomething in thine eye
Of joyous ſadneſs looks upon me wiſtfully.
(To Othus, *who takes him tenderly by the hand.)*

OTHUS.

Doſt thou not gueſs?—But I would ſpeak to thee
Of a brave ſoldier, who, in one ſhort moment
Of nature's weakneſs, has a wound receiv'd
That will unto his life as fatal prove
As felleſt foeman's thruſt: who in his reſt
Will not be mourn'd as brave men mourn the brave.
Juſtiniani in his cave of ſhame ——

RODRIGO.

And therein let him periſh!
He hath diſgrac'd a ſoldier's honeſt fame:
He hath diſgrac'd the country of his birth:
He hath —— It makes me ſtamp upon the ground
To think that one, who graſp'd with brother's hand
The noble Conſtantine, ſhould baſely turn.
Name not his curſed name!

OTHUS.

Art thou ſo ſtern? In a lone cave he groans,
On the damp earth, in deepeſt agony
Of the ſoul's ſhrewdeſt ſufferings. I have
By an old ſoldier been advis'd of this,
And I would go to him, but that I feel

I needs muſt go where a more powerful call
Doth ſummon me.

RODRIGO *(ſoftened).*

Ah! muſt thou then ſo ſoon, my gen'rous Othus!
Muſt thou ſo ſoon? Well, aſk whate'er thou wilt:
I give my chafed paſſion to the winds.
Ah! goeſt thou? Do I the laſt remain
Of thoſe who lov'd the noble Conſtantine?
The laſt of a brave band? Alas! alas!
(Embracing Othus *tenderly.)*

OSMIR *(to* Mahomet, *who ſtrides up and down in gloomy agitation).*

Moſt mighty Mahomet, what thus diſturbs you?
May not your ſlave in humble zeal be told?

MAHOMÉT.

Away! away! thy humble zeal I know;
Yea, and the humble zeal of ſuch as thou art.
The willing ſervice of a brave man's heart,
That precious pearl, upon the earth exiſts,
But I have found it not.
(Turning to Othus *and* Rodrigo.)
Ye valiant men who have ſo ſerv'd your prince,
There ſtill is in the world a mighty monarch,
Who, if he might retain you near his throne,
Shall he ſay near his heart, in ſuch dear zeal?
Would think his greatneſs honour'd.

OTHUS.

Great ſultan, thou haſt conquer'd with ſuch arms
As power has given to thee, th' imperial city
Of royal Conſtantine; but other arms,
That might the friends of Conſtantine ſubdue,
Heav'n has denied thee.

RODRIGO.

No, mighty prince; they who have ſerv'd for love,
Cannot like flying pennants be transferr'd
From bark to bark.

MAHOMET *(impatiently)*.

I underſtand you well, and you are free.
Mine arms, ſuch as they are, of heav'n are bleſs'd,
That is enough.

OTHUS.

That were indeed enough; but heaven ofttimes
Succeſs beſtows where bleſſing is denied.
A ſecret ſpirit whiſpers to my heart,
That in theſe walls your weaken'd wretched race,
Slaves of their ſlaves, in gloomy priſon'd pomp
Shall ſhed each others blood, and make theſe towers
A place of groans and anguiſh, not of bliſs,
And think not when the good and valiant periſh
By worldly power o'erwhelm'd, that heaven's high favour
Shines not on them.—Oh, no! then ſhines it moſt.

For then in them it ſhews th' approving world
The worth of its beſt work.
And from their fate a glorious leſſon ſprings;
A leſſon of ſuch high ennobling power;
Connecting us with ſuch exalted things
As all do feel, but none with ſuch true force,
Such joy, ſuch triumph, as a dying man.
(Falling back into the arms of Rodrigo.)

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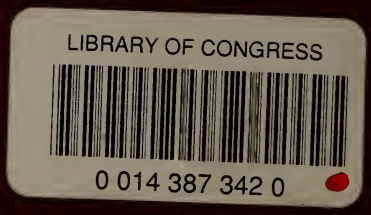
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